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Capitalism's Environmental Crisis —Is Technology the Answer?

John Bellamy Foster

Iraq Under Siege: Ten Years On

Anthony Arnove

Freedom Schooling

Grace Lee Boggs

Also*: The Role of Professional and Technical Workers in Progressive Social Transformation by Robert Heifetz; Alan G. Nasser on Dean Baker and Mark Weisbrot's *Social Security: The Phony Crisis*; and Mark Selden on John W. Dower's *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Praise for Karl Marx—albeit of a somewhat mocking kind—comes from the strangest places nowadays. In their new book *Future Perfect: The Challenge and Hidden Promise of Globalization*, John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, bestselling business authors and correspondents for the adamantly procapitalist *Economist* magazine, declare that, "as a prophet of socialism Marx may be kaput; but as a prophet of 'the universal interdependence of nations,' as he called globalization, he can still seem startlingly relevant. His description of globalization remains as sharp today as it was 150 years ago" (pp. 332-333). The same thing has been noticed in a quite different way in colleges and universities, as demand for courses on Marx, Marxism, and political economy appear once again to be on the rise.

One of us was recently drafted by graduate students, most of them veterans of the November and December 1999 protests in Seattle, to lead a course on the second and third volumes of *Capital*. This was remarkable for several reasons. Although the first volume of *Capital* was once known as the "worker's bible," and is still regularly studied in certain quarters, the second and third volumes of *Capital* have never been as widely read (except perhaps the section on the tendency for the rate of the profit to fall). The reasons are not difficult to discern. The first volume of *Capital* deals primarily with the direct exploitation of workers. The second and third volumes, in contrast, deal with circulation, competition, the division of surplus value into profit, interest and rent, the concrete conditions governing accumulation, financial capital, and agricultural production. All of these topics were necessary in order to provide a scientific assessment of capital's laws of motion but much of this

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Capitalism's Environmental Crisis—Is Technology the Answer?

by John Bellamy Foster

The standard solution offered to the environmental problem in advanced capitalist economies is to shift technology in a more benign direction: more energy-efficient production, cars that get better mileage, replacement of fossil fuels with solar power, and recycling of resources. Other environmental reforms, such as reductions in population growth and even cuts in consumption, are often advocated as well. The magic bullet of technology, however, is by far the favorite, seeming to hold out the possibility of environmental improvement with the least effect on the smooth working of the capitalist machine. The 1997 International Kyoto Protocol on global warming, designed to limit the greenhouse-gas emissions of nations, has only reinforced this attitude, encouraging many environmental advocates in the United States (including Al Gore in his presidential campaign) to advocate technological improvement in energy efficiency as the main escape from the environmental mess.

There are two ways in which technological change can lower environmental impact. First, it can reduce the materials and energy used per unit of output and, second, it can substitute less harmful technology. Much of the improvement in air quality since the nineteenth century, including its aesthetics, resulted from the reduction in the smoke and sulfur dioxide emissions for which coal-burning is notorious. Solar energy, in contrast to other present and prospective sources of energy, is not only available in

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inexhaustible supply (though limited at any given time and place), but is also ecologically benign. Environmentalists in general therefore prefer a shift to solar energy. Such considerations have encouraged the view that all stops should be pulled out on promoting technologies that increase efficiency, particularly of energy, and use more benign productive processes that get rid of the worst pollutants.

I want to concentrate here on the energy efficiency part of this. The issue of the materials used and the production technology are much more intractable problems under the current regime of accumulation. One of the reasons for this is that current productive processes often involve toxins of the worst imaginable kind. For example, we know that the proliferation of synthetic chemicals, many of which are extraordinarily harmful—carcinogenic and teratogenic—is associated with the growth of the petrochemical industry and agribusiness, producing products such as plastics and pesticides. (This was the central message of Barry Commoner's *Closing Circle.*) Yet attempts to overcome this dependence on toxic production create a degree of resistance from the vested interests of the capitalist order that only a revolutionary movement could surmount. In contrast, straightforward improvements in energy efficiency have always been emphasized by capital itself, and fall *theoretically* within the domain of what the system is said to be able to accomplish—even what it prides itself in.

In the past, it was common for environmentalists to compare the problems of the "three worlds" using the well-known environmental impact or "PAT" formula (Population x Affluence x Technology = Environmental Impact). The third world's environmental problems, according to this dominant perspective, could be seen as arising first and foremost from population growth rather than technology or affluence (given the low level of industrialization). The environmental problems of the Soviet bloc were attributed to its inferior technology, which was less efficient in terms of materials and energy consumed per unit of output, and more toxic in its immediate, localized environmental effects, than in the West. The West's chief environmental prob-

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lem, in contrast, was attributed neither to its population growth nor its technology (areas in which it had comparative environmental advantages), but to its affluence and the growing burden that this imposed on the environment. The ace in the hole for the wealthy capitalist countries was always seen to be their technological prowess—which would allow them to promote environmental improvements while also expanding their affluence (that is, growth of capital and consumption).

What likelihood then is there that new or newly applied technology will be able to prevent environmental degradation from expanding along with the economy?

The Jevons Paradox

In order to answer this question it is useful to look at what ecological economists call the Jevons Paradox.* William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882) is best known as a British economist who was one of the pioneers of contemporary neoclassical economic analysis, with its subjective value theory rooted in marginal utility. Jevons first achieved national fame, however, for his work *The Coal Question* (1865). Jevons argued that British industrial growth had relied on cheap coal and that the increasing cost of coal, as deeper seams were mined, would generate economic stagnation. Substituting coal for corn, within the general Malthusian argument that says population increases faster than food supply, he observed: "Our subsistence no longer depends upon our produce of corn. The momentous repeal of the Corn Laws throws us from corn upon coal" (*The Coal Question, 3rd ed.*, 194-195). Jevons argued that neither technology nor substitutability (that is, the substitution of other energy sources for coal) could alter this.

Jevons was fabulously wrong in his calculations. His main mistake was to underestimate the importance of coal substitutes such as petroleum and hydroelectric power. Commenting on Jevons' argument in 1936, Keynes said it was "over-strained and exaggerated" (*Essays in Biography*, 1951, 259).

* See Mario Giampietro and Kozo Mayumi, "Another View of Development, Ecological Degradation, and North-South Trade," *Review of Social Economy*, vol. 56, no. 1 (Spring 1998), pp. 24-26.

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But there is one aspect of Jevons' argument that has attracted the admiration of ecological economists. Chapter Seven of *The Coal Question* was entitled "Of the Economy of Fuel." Here he argued that increased efficiency in using a natural resource, such as coal, only resulted in increased demand for that resource, not a reduction in demand. This was because such improvement in efficiency led to a rising scale of production. "It is wholly a confusion of ideas," Jevons wrote,

> to suppose that the economic use of fuel is equivalent to a diminished consumption. The very contrary is the truth. As a rule, the new modes of economy will lead to an increase of consumption according to a principle recognized in many parallel instances.... The same principles apply, with even greater force and distinctiveness to the use of such a general agent as coal. It is the very economy of its use which leads to its extensive consumption.... Nor is it difficult to see how this paradox arises.... If the quantity of coal used in a blast-furnace, for instance, be diminished in comparison with the yield, the profits of the trade will increase, new capital will be attracted, the price of pig-iron will fall, but the demand for it increase; and eventually the greater number of furnaces will more than make up for the diminished consumption of each. And if such is not always the result within a single branch, it must be remembered that the progress of any branch of manufacture excites a new activity in most other branches and leads indirectly, if not directly, to increased inroads upon our seams of coal.... Civilization says Baron Liebig, is the economy of power, and our power is coal. It is the very economy of the use of coal that makes our industry what it is; and the more we render it efficient and economical, the more will our industry thrive, and our works of civilization grow (140-142).

Jevons went on to argue in detail that the whole history of the steam engine was a history of successive economies in its use—and each time this led to further increases in the scale of production and the demand for coal. "Every such improvement of the engine," he observed, "when effected, does but accelerate anew the consumption of coal. Every branch of manufacture receives a fresh impulse—hand labor is still further replaced by mechanical labor" (152-153).

The contemporary significance of the Jevons paradox is seen with respect to the automobile in the United States. The intro-

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duction of more energy-efficient automobiles in this country in the 1970s did not curtail the demand for fuel because driving increased and the number of vehicles on the road doubled. Similarly, technological improvements in refrigeration simply led to more and larger refrigerators. The same tendencies are in effect within industry, independent of individual consumption.

Technology and Accumulation

Although Jevons is credited deservedly for introducing his paradox, the full force of the problem he raises is not addressed in *The Coal Question.* As one of the early neoclassical economists, Jevons had abandoned the focus on class and accumulation that characterized the work of the classical economists. His economic analysis was primarily static equilibrium theory, ill-equipped to deal with dynamic issues of accumulation and growth. Jevons, who in many ways naturalized capitalism, could provide no more convincing explanations for continuously increasing demand than to point to individual behavior and Malthusian demographics.

Here it is important to acknowledge that capitalism is a system that pursues accumulation and growth for its own sake. It is a juggernaut driven by the single-minded need on the part of business for ever-greater accumulation of capital. "Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the Prophets!" wrote Marx in *Capital* (vol. 1, ch. 24, section 3). The only real checks on this process are those generated by mutual competition and impersonal market forces, and, over the long run, periodic crises.

To be sure, mainstream economists since the days of Adam Smith have claimed that capitalism is a system devoted directly to the pursuit of wealth but indirectly to the pursuit of human needs. In reality, the first goal entirely overrides and transforms the second. Capitalists do not restrict their activities to the production of commodities that satisfy basic human needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and the amenities essential to the reproduction of human beings and society. Instead, the production of more and more profits becomes an end in itself, and the types of goods produced or their ultimate usefulness becomes completely immateri-

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al. The use value of commodities is more and more subordinated to their exchange value. Use values that are devoted to ostentatious consumption, and that are even destructive to human beings and the earth (in the sense of rendering it unusable for human purposes), are manufactured and the desire for these destructive goods is manufactured along with them through the force of modern marketing (see Paul M. Sweezy, "Capitalism and the Environment," *Monthly Review*, vol. 41, no. 2, June 1989).*

It is this singleminded obsession with capital accumulation that distinguishes capitalism from all other social systems, explaining why it can never stand still. A "stationary capitalism," as Joseph Schumpeter observed, is a "*contradictio in adjecto*" (*Essays*, 29). Competition, of the sort that forces upon capital continual transformations in the means of production in order to maintain and enhance profitability, provides the essential motor behind this drive to accumulate. This is what Schumpeter, in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, called capitalism's tendency toward "creative destruction;" its creation through innovation of new and more efficient forms of production and distribution, and at the same time its destruction of previous forms of production and distribution. Caught up in this unrelenting process of accumulation and creative destruction, the system runs roughshod over each and every thing that stands in its path; all human and natural requirements that interfere with the accumulation of capital are considered barriers to be overcome.

The exponential growth of capitalism and the increasing consumption of raw materials and energy that goes with it have resulted in a rapidly compounding environmental problem. It is this that lies behind what the Worldwatch Institute, in its *State of the World 1999*, called "the acceleration of history"—by which they mean the increasingly rapid transformation of the planetary environment and destruction of ecosystems.

Since there is no way in which the earth's fundamental capacity to supply the rapidly increasing demands that are being placed on it can increase, the only way in which the problem can be

*Regulation theorists speak of a "regime of accumulation," geared to automobilization, which they call "Fordism." But this is historically misleading for various reasons. See John Bellamy Foster, "The Fetish of Fordism," *Monthly Review*, vol. 39, no. 10 (March 1988), pp. 14-33.

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solved is by somehow reducing these demands. There are three ways of conceiving this: stabilization and even reduction of world population; improvements in technology; and more far-reaching socioeconomic transformations. Since most demographers agree that population is gradually stabilizing but that this will not in itself solve the problem, given that per capita consumption of materials and energies continues to rise exponentially, the search for a solution invariably focuses on the other two aspects of the problem, and usually on the technological component.

Enter the Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol, which requires advanced capitalist countries to cut their emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide to 5.2 percent below 1990 levels sometime between 2008 and 2012, has generated enormous resistance among those countries—despite the fact that failure to check the addition of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere would trigger a series of chain reactions, leading to global environmental disaster within a relatively short span of historical time. The United States has not ratified the Protocol, and indeed the chances of ratification were so nonexistent that President Clinton did not even send it to the Senate for ratification. Intense negotiations about the level at which carbon dioxide emissions have to be reduced, the allowances to be made for forests (so-called "carbon sinks"), and the role of tradable pollution permits that would allow states to comply by buying permits to pollute are still taking place.

The main object of the Kyoto Protocol, with regard to carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, is to stop the exponential rate of their increase within the atmosphere. A return to 5 percent below the 1990 level of greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 would result in a strong check on the tendency for such emissions to increase exponentially along with the scale of production. At that point, the aim would obviously be to try to maintain this level (assuming no attempt is made to reduce it further), so that emissions increased only arithmetically, not exponentially. Although it should be acknowledged that emissions at 5 percent below 1990 levels would still mean very substantial increases in the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

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This is often treated, as I have noted, as a technological problem, particularly where carbon dioxide emissions are concerned. Future efficiencies in energy consumption, in gas mileage, are expected to allow an increase in the scale of production without worsening the annual additions of carbon dioxide. In the decade following the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil crisis of 1973, the advanced capitalist countries as a whole, faced with higher oil prices, lowered their overall energy consumption to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio (or energy intensity of GDP) by producing smaller cars with better gas mileage, as well as through other economies in the use of fuel. (Although the Jevons paradox insured that the overall impact of greenhouse gases continued to rise.) Once this decade was over, cheaper oil prices allowed this ratio to rise once more.

The Social Structure of Production and Consumption

Still, it would be wrong to see this as a mere technological problem or one of fuel efficiency, since the technologies that would allow us to avoid such a rapid buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere have long existed. If we take transport, for example, there have long been modern means of transportation, particularly public transit, that would vastly reduce carbon-dioxide emissions compared to a transport system built around the private automobile, and that would actually be more efficient in terms of the free and rapid movement of people as well. Instead, the drive to accumulate capital pushed the advanced capitalist countries down the road of maximum dependence on the automobile, as the most efficient way of generating profits. The growth of the "automobile-industrialization complex," which includes not simply automobiles themselves but the glass, rubber, and steel industries, the petroleum industry, the users of highways for profit (such as trucking firms), the makers of highways, and the real-estate interests tied to the urban-suburban structure—constitutes the axis around which accumulation in the twentieth century largely turned (Sweezy, "Cars and Cities," *Monthly Review*, vol. 23, no. 11, April 1972).

In Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital*, which was heavily influenced by Schumpeter's business cycle theory (in

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addition to the theories of Marx, Veblen, Keynes, and Kalecki), the authors argued that as a historical system, capitalism has always been dependent on epoch-making innovations. These are the kinds of innovations that alter the entire structure of production and the geography of production on a massive scale and around which the bulk of investment comes to cluster.

For Baran and Sweezy, three epoch-making innovations had come into play in the history of capitalism—the steam engine, the railroad, and the automobile. What distinguished the automobile in this respect is that it served as an epoch-making innovation twice—in two stages of automobilization. The first was the expansion of automobile production in the period up through the 1920s, including the beginning of the building of highways. The second was the massive buildup symbolized by the construction of the interstate highway system, the destruction of rival forms of public transit, and the accelerated rate of suburbanization that occurred immediately after the Second World War. It is not too much to say that the dominance of the automobile was associated with an entire regime of production and consumption, which has underpinned and still underpins accumulation in the advanced capitalist states.*

It is this automobile-industrial complex that is at the heart of our dependence on petroleum today and that accounts for the largest portion of carbon-dioxide emissions. At the time of the Gulf War with Iraq, President Bush told the population of the United States that the purpose of the war was to defend "our way of life." Everyone knew what this meant: petroleum. Jevons had called coal the "general agent" on which the entire British industrial system depended and the economical use of (or cheapness) of coal as what allowed industry to thrive. Today petroleum plays an equally dominant role in our industrial system.

The capitalist class is divided when it comes to reductions in carbon-dioxide emissions to slow down the rate of global warm-

*The literature on the importance of the Marxian distinction between use value and exchange value in understanding environmental problems (including the relation between economic waste and social-environmental costs) is vast. See, for example, John Bellamy Foster and Henryk Szlajfer, *The Faltering Economy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), pp. 297-316; Shigeto Tsuru, *The Political Economy of the Environment* (London: Athlone Press, 1999); and Paul Burkett, *Marx and Nature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

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ing. A significant part of the ruling class in the United States is willing to contemplate more efficient technology, not so much through a greatly expanded system of public transport, but rather through cars with greater gas mileage or perhaps even a shift to cars using more benign forms of energy. Efficiency in the use of energy, as long as it does not change the basic structure of production, is generally acceptable to capital as something that would ultimately spur production and increase the scale of accumulation (leading to the Jevons Paradox). But a very large and powerful segment of capital in the United States is not willing to accept even this, because greater gas mileage points generally to smaller engines and smaller cars. Auto producers today, more than ever, are making the bulk of their profits from the production of large vehicles, with the growth in the market for sports utility vehicles and minivans. Henry Ford II's well-known adage that "minicars make mini profits," is still the governing principle. As for the petroleum interests, their vested interest in promoting the demand for oil is obvious. Viewed from this standpoint, it is scarcely surprising that there were virtually no votes to ratify the Kyoto Protocol within the US Senate.

At every point, meanwhile, capitalists and their acolytes have blocked the implementation of solar power alternatives, some of which are entirely feasible at this stage. Corporations have sought to take over solar power from the grassroots movement, not in order to promote it, but in order to hold it in abeyance. Under capitalism, it is those energy sources that generate the most profits for capital—of which solar power is certainly not one—that are promoted, not those most beneficial to humanity and the earth. This story has been told by Daniel M. Berman and John T. O'Connor in *Who Owns the Sun?*

None of this, of course, should surprise us. Thorstein Veblen, who might, along with Rudolf Hilferding, be considered one of the originators of the theory of monopoly capitalism, emphasized the fact that capitalism, although it promoted a certain narrow kind of bottom-line efficiency, nonetheless represented a system of prodigious waste from any rational-planning perspective such as that of the engineer. He characterized the oil industry as one of "clam-

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orous waste and mishandling" that led inevitably to "big business and monopoly control" (*Absentee Ownership*, 200-201). For Veblen, the whole industrial system under monopoly capitalism (or, as he called it, the system of "absentee ownership") was permeated by reckless and useless consumption of human and natural resources, associated with the dominance of pecuniary goals over rational production. "The distinction between workmanship and salesmanship," he observed, "has progressively been blurred...until it will doubtless hold true now that the shop-cost of many articles produced for the market is mainly chargeable to the production of saleable appearances" (*Ibid.*, 300).

The sales effort has so penetrated into production itself that the use value criteria for commodities has been undermined and transformed by the needs of exchange value in quite radical ways. From this it is a small step to the Galbraithian "dependence effect"—that what we consume is dependent on the nature of production, rather than the reverse, as assumed in the "consumer sovereignty" hypothesis of neoclassical economics (Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, chapter 11). Control over production, coupled with the force of modern marketing, has given capital the power to manufacture "needs" (i.e., desires) along with products. In fact, "product development" in the giant corporation is usually seen as a subdivision of marketing.

Journalists never tire of pointing to the love of the automobile in the United States. But such "love" is more often than not a kind of desperation in the face of extremely narrow options. The ways in which cars, roads, public transports systems (often notable by their absence), urban centers, suburbs, and malls have been constructed mean that people often have virtually no choice but to drive if they are to work and live. Under these circumstances the car (or minivan), which consumers seem to crave, also becomes a kind of prison, made more tolerable (if only barely) by the introduction of cell phones and other gadgets. Meanwhile the social costs pile up. "Capitalism," as K. William Kapp declared in *The Social Costs of Private Enterprise*,

> must be regarded as an economy of unpaid costs, 'unpaid' in so far as a substantial portion of the actual costs of production remain unaccounted for in entrepreneurial outlays; instead they are shifted to, and ultimately borne by, third persons or by the community as a whole (231).

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In such a system, it makes no sense to see possibilities for sustainable development as limited to whether or not we can develop more technological efficiency within the current framework of production—as though our entire system of production, with all of its irrationality, waste, and exploitation has been "grandfathered" in. Rather, our hopes have to be pinned on transforming the system itself. This means not simply altering a particular "mode of regulation" of the system, as Marxist regulation theorists say, but in transcending the existing regime of accumulation in its essential aspects. It is not technology that constitutes the problem but the socioeconomic system itself. The social-productive means for implementing a more sustainable relation to the environment within the context of a developed socioeconomic formation are available. It is the social relations of production that stand in the way.

The Irreversibility of Capitalism's Environmental Crisis

Any attempt to follow out this contradiction in detail would take me well beyond the confines of the present essay. I agree with Paul Sweezy, who said in "Cars and Cities,"

> while I believe certain palliatives to be possible, at least in principle, within the framework of the present monopoly capitalist system, I do not think that fundamental changes in the structure of cities and their relation to society as a whole [or equally large changes within the structure of production and consumption] can be effected without a radical change in the social order (17).

For Marx, the very nature of capitalist society from the very beginning had been built on a metabolic rift between city and country, human beings and the earth—a rift that has now been heightened beyond anything that he could have imagined (see Foster, "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1999). There is an irreversible environmental crisis within global capitalist society. But setting aside capitalism, a sustainable relation to the earth is not beyond reach. To get there, we have to change our social relations.

Jevons had no answer to the paradox he raised. Britain could either rapidly use up its cheap source of fuel—the coal upon which its industrialization rested—or use it up more slowly. In the

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end, Jevons said they should use it up rapidly: "If we lavishly and boldly push forward in the creation of our riches, both material and intellectual, it is hard to over-estimate the pitch of beneficial influence to which we may attain in the present. But the maintenance of such a position is physically impossible. We have to make the momentous choice between brief but true greatness and longer continued mediocrity" (*The Coal Question*, 459-460). Put in that way, the direction to be taken was clear: to pursue glory in the present and a drastically degraded position for future generations. Insofar as Jevons' paradox continues to apply to us today—that is, insofar as technology by itself (given the present framework of production) offers no way out of our environmental dilemmas, which generally increase with the scale of the economy—we must either adopt Jevons' conclusion or pursue an alternative that Jevons never discussed and which doubtless never entered his mind: the transformation of the social relations of production in the direction of socialism, a society governed not by the search for profit but by peoples' genuine needs, and the requirements of socio-ecological sustainability.*

*"An energy revolution is both possible and necessary, but it will be achieved only as part of a broader revolution that takes power away from capital and puts it in the hands of the people where it belongs." Paul M. Sweezy, "The Guilt of Capitalism," *Monthly Review*, vol. 49, no. 2 (June 1997), p. 61.

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Iraq Under Siege: Ten Years On

by Anthony Arnove

It has been ten years since the United Nations imposed comprehensive sanctions on Iraq. The sanctions were adopted on August 6, 1990, forty-five years to the day after the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, killing an estimated one hundred thousand people and leaving a toxic legacy that still affects the population of the area. The bombing was soon followed by an attack on Nagasaki. The coincidence is a telling one. For all the US government's rhetoric about halting the use of weapons of mass destruction, the United States stands in a league of its own in using and proliferating them. As horrific as the use of nuclear weapons against Japan was, perhaps five to ten times as many people have died in Iraq as a consequence of the war led by the United States and Britain, under United Nations (UN) auspices, during the last decade.

The UN adopted the sanctions four days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and reaffirmed them after the brutal 1991 Gulf War, which claimed tens of thousands of lives, expelled Iraq from Kuwait, and in the process reduced the country to a "pre-industrial" state, as a UN-led delegation observed just after the war.[1] Sanctions were allegedly extended to disarm Iraq of its biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. Little was said at the time about the contradictions of the United States and other members of the Security Council—the countries responsible for the overwhelming majority of sales of arms in the region and internationally—

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voicing such concern over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Even less was said about some other inconvenient facts, among them that the Iraqi government had developed its destructive and repressive capacity with the support and encouragement of its friends in Washington, London, and other Western capitals, and that Israel had a nuclear weapons arsenal of some two hundred warheads and continued to occupy southern Lebanon, as well as the territories it had illegally seized in 1948 and 1967, in violation of numerous unenforced UN resolutions.

Ten years on, despite evidence from top former UN arms inspectors and from other international agencies that Iraq has been "qualitatively disarmed," the sanctions remain in place. Sanctions will be maintained "until the end of time, or as long as he [Saddam Hussein] is in power," President Bill Clinton explained. While US policy now calls for a "regime change" in Iraq, the US government consciously kept Saddam Hussein in power at the end of the Gulf War, preferring "an iron-fisted Iraqi junta," in the words of *New York Times* correspondent Thomas Friedman, to a popular rebellion.[2]

In reality, the US government would like someone from within the military to take power and rule the country, as Hussein did when he was a US ally during the 1980–1988 war with Iran and through the invasion of Kuwait. However, the United States would like it to be someone without any regional ambitions that conflict with the first rule of Middle East politics: the United States calls the shots. The ridiculously named Iraq Liberation Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton, has set aside ninety-seven million dollars for the alleged Iraqi opposition, a badly divided group based in London and entirely lacking any social base in Iraq. Among the forces receiving US funding and support is a group that hopes to restore the Iraqi monarchy.[3]

In the meantime, ordinary Iraqis are dying in numbers that defy comprehension, as a deliberate and predictable consequence of a policy designed to strangle the Iraqi economy. The people paying the price are the poor, the working class, and, especially, children—rather than the alleged targets of the sanctions, President Hussein and his inner circle in the ruling Baathist

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Party. In fact, the sanctions have benefited the government in many respects, while weakening and dividing the population. A small group of people has grown fabulously wealthy from the black market generated by the embargo. In downtown Baghdad, one sees pristine new Mercedes sedans and sport utility vehicles amid the dilapidated deathtraps ordinary Iraqis drive, negotiating dangerous four-way intersections without functioning stoplights. Though the sanctions have kept Iraq from importing items essential for maintaining its water sewage and sanitation system, including chlorine, the tiny elite in Baghdad smuggles in chlorine for their private swimming pools. There has been a boom in private pool construction in Baghdad during the embargo.[4]

After extensive countrywide surveys, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that the Iraqi mortality rate for children under five has doubled in southern and central Iraq, largely as a result of the Gulf War, its impact, and the sanctions. In a country of twenty-two million people over nearly ten years, that translates into five hundred thousand "excess" deaths. The number one killer of children under five in Iraq today is dehydration from diarrhea. The State Department argument that these deaths are "all Saddam's fault," as evidenced by the improvement in under-five mortality rates in the autonomous region in northern Iraq controlled by the Kurds, doesn't hold up to a moment's examination. The north is far richer agriculturally than the south and center; receives more humanitarian aid per capita, including cash assistance forbidden in the rest of the country; benefits from the porous Turkish border; and did not suffer nearly the infrastructural damage and pollution from the Gulf War as the south, where the US military fired more than one million rounds of munitions tipped with radioactive depleted uranium.[5]

Iraqis now face widespread malnutrition and other diseases endemic to the poverty-stricken third world, such as malaria, cholera, and tuberculosis. As repressive and undemocratic as the government was then, Iraq had an advanced medical, educational, and social infrastructure by the end of the 1980s. It has been destroyed. The UN sanctions committee, which must approve any purchases the Iraqi government wants to make with the rev-

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enues of its oil sales, routinely denies permission for contracts to rebuild this infrastructure under its "dual use" criteria: Iraq cannot import civilian goods that might have a potential military application. Among the items that have been kept out through this mechanism, primarily through the veto power of the US representative on the committee, are ambulances, chlorinators, and even pencils. Currently, some 1.8 billion dollars worth of items requested by Iraq are "on hold," thanks to these restrictions, in some cases making other items that have been imported, such as spare parts, worthless.

London-based investigative journalist John Pilger recently confronted Peter van Walsum, the chair of the UN sanctions committee, about how its decisions are made.

Pilger:	How much power does the United States exercise over your committee?
van Walsum:	We operate by consensus.
Pilger:	And what if the Americans object?
van Walsum:	We don't operate.[6]

In 1990, one Iraqi *dinar* exchanged for around three US dollars. Now, in the currency exchanges of Baghdad, one dollar trades for 2200 *dinars*. As a result, the savings and earnings power of almost every Iraqi has been destroyed. Children now leave school earlier, if they start at all, to help their families piece together the means to survive. In a seventh-grade classroom I visited outside Baghdad in March 2000, with a delegation from the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Voices in the Wilderness, a teacher stood before a room full of students without the benefit of a single piece of paper, pencil, book, or notebook. When she asked the students in Arabic to raise their hands if they had to work after school, every hand went up. Some of the children will shine shoes or sell kerosene; others will sell their bodies for sex. Later, in the hallway, the teacher explained to us that she also had to work after school because she could no longer live on her teaching salary, now the equivalent of around three dollars a month, and could not afford medical treatment she needed.

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Blood for Oil

To understand what is happening in Iraq, you need to start with a simple fact that is rarely discussed in the media: after Saudi Arabia, Iraq has the world's largest proven oil reserves. Some 11 percent of the world's oil is under Iraq, and because it is so close to the surface, it is among the world's cheapest oil to extract, making it more profitable than oil from the Gulf of Mexico or the North Sea.

While some have attempted to explain US policy in Iraq by pointing to the price of gas at American pumps, the picture is more complicated. The leading supplier of oil to the United States is actually Canada, which only recently displaced Venezuela from the top position. The US interest in Middle Eastern oil goes deeper. In addition to being so profitable, US planners have long understood that Middle Eastern oil is of unparalleled geostrategic importance. As early as 1945, the US State Department noted that oil "has historically played a larger part in the external relations of the United States than any other commodity."[7] In particular, the government recognized that control over the region's oil would give it strategic leverage over competing capitalist states, especially Japan and Germany.

Iraq was dominated by British interests in the 1930s and 1940s. But when explorations uncovered large oil reserves in Iraq in the early 1950s, the United States quickly moved to push the United Kingdom aside. "Conditions changed dramatically" in Iraq in the 1950s, explains historian Samira Haj. "Production rates increased, royalties rose sharply, and oil became the leading sector of the [Iraqi] economy." As socialist Tony Cliff observed:

> When speaking about imperialism in the Middle East, what comes to mind first and foremost is oil. . . . If we were talking about Middle East oil before the Second World War, we would have spoken mainly of British oil imperialism. Then Britain controlled 100 per cent of Iranian oil and 47.5 per cent of Iraqi oil; the US interest was only 23.75 per cent in Iraq (equal to France's). Since then the situation has changed radically: in 1959 the US share rose to 50 per cent of all Middle East oil, while that of Britain declined to 18 per cent (France had 5 per cent, the Netherlands 3 per cent, other, including the local Arab governments, 24 per cent). Now oil imperialism is really United States imperialism.[8]

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The United States emerged from the Second World War with unprecedented economic and military power, and immediately sought to capitalize on the advantages it had gained. Seeking to develop "a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security" (in the words of State Department planner George Kennan, writing in an internal planning document in 1948), the United States established close ties with client regimes in the region, coming to rely especially on Israel and Iran under the Shah.[9] But the regional "pattern of relationships" underwent significant changes in 1979. When the US-backed Shah was expelled from Iran in a revolution, the government looked to Iraq and Saddam Hussein, who had risen through the Baathist Party power structure to become president in 1979, to "contain" Iran. During its brutal war with Iran from 1980 to 1988, the United States armed and supported Iraq, while also secretly playing the two countries against one another.

Today, the media describes at great length how Hussein "gassed his own people." Yet when the thousands of Kurds were gassed in the March 1988 Halabja massacre, the US government increased agricultural credits to his regime and sent a delegation of Washington politicians, including Senator Robert Dole, to encourage better relations between the two countries and to advise Hussein on how to deal with the American media.

Sub-imperialism

Hussein, of course, would soon go from being a dictator whose weapons and repression were favored (since they were stamped "Made in the U.S.A.") to the government's greatest enemy, the subject of endless discussions of the evil that the United States confronts on the world stage. As historian Howard Zinn comments, "It's as if the United States never encountered a dictator before," the Shah in Iran, Suharto in Indonesia, Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire (now Congo), and Hussein in Iraq aside.[10]

1979 was significant in another respect, in terms of the shifting balance of power in the Middle East. When Anwar Sadat signed the Camp David Accords with Israel in September 1978, leading

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to a March 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, the question of who in the Arab world would "take up the mantle of strategic deterrence vis-à-vis Israel," in Naseer Aruri's formulation, was up for grabs.[11] Hussein hoped Iraq could fill that void, an ambition that would place him on a collision course with the United States.

Iraq represented a clear example of what Alex Callinicos has described as "the rise of sub-imperialisms in the Third World:"

> The key factor in the development of a more pluralistic and more unstable world order has been the rise over the past two decades of the sub-imperialisms—that is, of Third World powers aspiring to the kind of political and military domination on a regional scale which the superpowers have enjoyed globally. The Middle East, as the most unstable region since 1945 . . . is unfortunate enough to have the largest number of contenders for this role—Israel, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey.[12]

Hussein crossed the line in the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The United States had built up the Iraqi regime against Iran for strategic purposes, but would not allow Hussein to achieve his regional ambitions unchecked, especially if they threatened US control over oil. The Gulf War alone ensured this fact, savagely destroying Iraq's infrastructure, as well as targeting sites of historic and cultural importance. The embargo has prevented Iraq from rebuilding, while bleeding the population and holding it hostage to the US commitment to "political and military domination."

The Hidden War

While sanctions have been presented as an alternative to military intervention, they have taken a greater toll than even the Gulf War; and the embargo has been punctuated by numerous military assaults on Iraq. One of President Clinton's first acts in office, after turning back Haitian refugees seeking asylum, was to send missiles into downtown Baghdad, killing a number of Iraqis, including the Iraqi artist Leila al-Attar. Since the brutal Operation Desert Fox bombing of December 1998, American and British jets have been bombing Iraq on an almost-daily basis.

"Civilian deaths and injuries are a regular part of the little-discussed US and British air operation over Iraq," the

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Washington Post acknowledged in a rare article discussing the attacks in what are known as the "no-fly" zones over Iraq. The two countries claim to be "enforcing" a nonexistent UN resolution in carrying out the bombings; the zones have no legal basis. The multibillion dollar operation has far exceeded the scale of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) operation in the Balkans last year, but has been consciously insulated from public attention by the Clinton and Blair administrations. According to Pentagon figures, US and UK fighter planes have flown more than 280,000 sorties since the zones were first established. Since the massive escalation of the attacks starting in December 1998, the UK has dropped an estimated seventy-eight tons of weapons on southern Iraq alone, compared with 2.5 tons during the previous six years.[13]

In Basra, Iraq's major southern city, I met Iqbal Fartous, who now calls herself Um Hydir ("mother of Hydir") after the son she lost in one such bombing in January 1999. Hydir was killed with several other neighbors on a close-knit urban street. Her other son, Mustafa, who is now six, survived. But Um Hydir pulled up his shirt and pulled down his pants to show us the multiple shards of glass and debris that are clearly visible beneath the surface of his skin. UN officials, including Hans von Sponeck, who recently resigned as UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq to protest the sanctions, have documented that the bombings have routinely hit civilians and essential infrastructure, as well as livestock.

The United States claims the "no-fly" zones were established to protect Kurds in northern Iraq and Shiite Muslims in the south. Yet they have done nothing of the sort. The hypocrisy of the US position was exposed again in April when Turkey—a major US and NATO ally, which "plays a critical role in protecting American security interests in the region" (according to the *New York Times*) and serves as a base for US military operations in the region, including the "no-fly" zone assaults—staged a massive incursion into northern Iraq in an ethnic cleansing campaign intended to eradicate the very Kurds allegedly being protected by Western forces. "In what has become an annual event that marks the arrival of spring," the *Guardian* newspaper in Britain report-

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ed, "thousands of Turkish troops have crossed the border into northern Iraq during the past few days to hunt down members of the rebel Kurdistan Worker's Party. . . . Almost anywhere else in the world, thousands of heavily armed soldiers crossing an international border would be big news. But this latest Turkish incursion into Iraq will be greeted with barely a murmur in the west."[14]

Turning the Tide

As hard as the proponents of sanctions have tried to hide the evidence of the human toll of the war on Iraq, they are increasingly finding themselves on the defensive, thanks to pressure from a growing international activist movement opposed to the embargo. "The [Clinton] administration's policy toward Iraq faces intensifying diplomatic criticism and international concern that economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations are punishing the Iraqi people, not Mr. Hussein's government," the *New York Times* reported in July. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council is "faced with growing criticism of embargoes that fail to deter dictators but often hurt civilians" and "is having a hard time responding to critics of sanctions against Iraq, where, according to a new estimate from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 80 percent of the civilian population has been negatively affected." In late March, US Secretary-General Kofi Annan admitted, "We are in danger of losing the argument or propaganda war—if we haven't lost it already—about who is responsible for this situation, President Saddam Hussein or the United Nations." Annan added: "we are accused of causing suffering to an entire population."[15]

Hans von Sponeck's resignation this spring made him the second top UN official in Iraq to resign, following the principled example of Denis Halliday, the former humanitarian coordinator who stepped down in fall 1998 and has since dedicated himself to ending what he describes as "genocide" in Iraq. Just after von Sponeck stepped down, Jutta Burghardt, the director of the UN World Food Program operation in Iraq, also resigned. "I fully support what Mr. von Sponeck was saying," said Burghardt. "It is a true humanitarian tragedy what is happening here and I believe

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any human being who looks at the facts and the impact of the sanctions on the population will not deny that he is right." Tun Myat, von Sponeck's replacement, reported in October that "although [Iraq's food] distribution system ranked among the world's best, the lot of ordinary Iraqis has failed to improve because their living conditions remain mired in chronic deprivation."[16]

The mainstream media have begun reporting on the war in a way that we have not seen in the past ten years. *The Economist* magazine recently observed that:

> Sanctions impinge on the lives of all Iraqis every moment of the day. In Basra, Iraq's second city, power flickers on and off, unpredictable in the hours it is available. . . . Smoke from jerry-rigged generators and vehicles hangs over the town in a thick cloud. The tap-water causes diarrhea, but few can afford the bottled sort. Because the sewers have broken down, pools of stinking muck have leached through the surface all over town. That effluent, combined with pollution upstream, has killed most of the fish in the Shatt al-Arab river and has left the remainder unsafe to eat. The government can no longer spray for sand-flies or mosquitoes, so insects have proliferated, along with the diseases they carry.
>
> Most of the once-elaborate array of government services have vanished. The archeological service has taken to burying painstakingly excavated ruins for want of the proper preservative chemicals. The government-maintained irrigation and drainage network has crumbled, leaving much of Iraq's prime agricultural land either too dry or too salty to cultivate. Sheep and cattle, no longer shielded by government vaccination programs, have succumbed to pests and diseases by the hundreds of thousands. Many teachers in the state-run schools do not bother to show up for work any more. Those who do must teach listless, malnourished children, often without the benefit of books, desks or even blackboards.[17]

Activists in the United States successfully targeted commencement addresses last spring by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a vocal supporter of the sanctions, at University of California at Berkeley, George Washington University, and Northeastern University. At Berkeley's graduation, Fadia Rafeedie, who was awarded the university's highest honor for a graduating senior, gave a powerful speech condemning the war

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on Iraq's people. Albright was spared having to hear Rafeedie's words because the university rearranged the program to put Albright ahead of her. As protestors inside held up banners describing Albright as a "war criminal," security guards quickly escorted her out, driving her past a large protest outside the auditorium; fifty-nine protesters were removed from the hall.

Such activism was critical to ending the Vietnam War and became closely connected to a broader struggle in this country for women's liberation, gay liberation, civil rights, and socialism. At a time when growing numbers of people have been radicalized and are questioning the price ordinary people here and abroad pay for US imperialism and its domination of institutions such as the UN, the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, the opportunities for reviving the anti-imperialist left in this country have never been better. It is not an exaggeration to say that the lives of billions depend on building that anti-imperialist movement, starting with the immediate task of ending the sanctions on Iraq.

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"The working individual is not only a stabilizer of *present,* but also, and to a far greater extent, a squanderer of *past* solar heat. As to what we have done in the way of squandering our reserves of energy, our coal, ore, forests, etc., you are better informed than I am."

—Engels to Marx, December 19, 1882

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The Role of Professional and Technical Workers in Progressive Social Transformation

by Robert Heifetz

During the 1930s, a small but significant group of radical professional and technical workers formed the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists, and Technicians (FAECT), a predominantly left-led labor union within the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The formation of this union took place within the context of the emerging "new working class" of professional and technical workers, the consequence of US capital's embrace of science and "scientific management" during the period of rapid capitalist development between 1890 and 1930. FAECT was instrumental in demonstrating that at least one sector of these workers could break the hegemony that the elitist and often anti-union professional societies had over those workers by more successfully addressing their pressing economic and professional concerns. By integrating these members of the "new working class" into the older, blue-collar working class, FAECT also helped to weaken the ideological, psychological, and organizational ties management had sought to build with this new stratum, winning them instead to the progressive social agenda of the growing trade-union movement. An examination of FAECT's history and ultimate demise offers us insight into the prospects for organizing such workers today and illuminates the role they can play in progressive social transformation.

Professional and technical workers have played an ambivalent role in capitalism. With rare exceptions, they have not seen themselves as members of the working class, but they have also imagined themselves as distinct from the owners of the means of production and distribution. As skilled workers trained to ana-

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lyze, design, plan, and manage production and distribution with maximum efficiency, they have often viewed owners as irrational and greedy in their concern to maximize profits rather than allocate scarce resources rationally. They saw themselves as a "third force," located nervously between labor and capital. It was from their ranks that the Scientific Management Movement, active during the Progressive Era between the 1890s and the onset of the Great Depression, was born.

The Scientific Management Movement saw itself as the only force that was competent, by training and professional commitment, to run industry properly—that is, "scientifically." To most of its members, employers and especially unions were perceived as interested in protecting their own turf rather than maximizing production for the good of society. For Frederick Taylor, the dominant voice of this movement, scientific management "renders labor unions and strikes unnecessary." Unions and collective bargaining meant "interference" with what he defined as natural laws governing work and production. All that was necessary was that management use "correct methods." It was simply impossible to bargain about "scientific fact."[1]

However, the more progressive members of this movement sought labor's support in achieving more rational organization of industry to serve society better. Their intellectual leader was Thorstein Veblen. Influenced by the end of a devastating world war and the Bolshevik Revolution, Veblen saw the potential for radical social change led by society's technicians and supported by the rest of the workforce; he wrote, ". . . the situation is ready for a self-selected, but inclusive Soviet of technicians to take over the economic affairs of the country provided that their pretensions continue to have the support of the industrial rank and file . . ." Of course, Veblen was realistic enough to know that the technicians traditionally were a "safe and sane" lot," "placidly content with the 'full dinner-pail' which the lieutenants of the Vested Interests allow them," but he foresaw that, "In time, with sufficient provocation, this popular frame of mind might change.[2]

FAECT

Sufficient provocation did indeed occur with the devastating onset of the Great Depression, which brought technical and professional workers unprecedented levels of sudden unemployment, job insecurity, and reduction of income and benefits.

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Professional, academic, and popular journals and magazines of the period were filled with references to this shocking state of affairs. By 1932, architects had one-seventh the work they had had in 1928. Six of every seven draftsmen, specification writers, and construction superintendents lost their jobs. Between 1930 and 1934, more than one-third of all engineers had some period of unemployment. Half the unemployed were out of work for more than one year. By December 1932, one-fifth of the ten thousand chemists and chemical engineers who lived or worked within fifty miles of New York City had been laid off. This economic catastrophe generated a change in outlook among many of Veblen's "docile technicians." As industrial relations professor Herbert Northrup put it in a 1946 monograph, "Perhaps the most important reasons for the unionization of engineers and chemists derive from the economic hardships they suffered during the depression of the 1930s."[3]

Under the impact of the Depression, spontaneous organizations of technicians and engineers formed within companies and in cities. The most active center was New York City, home of urban radicalism in the United States. By 1929, the more militant technicians and engineers in that city had formed the Union of Technical Men, Local 37 of the American Federation of Labor (AFL)-affiliated International Federation of Technical Engineers, Architects and Draftsmen. It was soon expelled from the AFL for "excessive radicalism," but remained intact as an independent organization. By the summer of 1933, several small technical employee organizations "made up mostly of civil engineers" had organized loosely as the United Committee of Architects, Engineers, and Chemists.

The Depression's radicalizing effect on the consciousness of professional and technical workers was compounded by the failure of existing professional organizations to protect the interests of their members. On the morning of August 12, 1933, the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Civil Engineers published minimum-wage standards for draftsmen in the Construction Industry Code, the government document that established industrial standards (under the National Industrial Recovery Act) for each profession. Not only were these standards insultingly low, but the professional organizations responsible had totally failed to consult their members about these critical decisions. The members' response was rapid and forceful. A meeting called that very evening by the United

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Committee to address this issue was attended by some two hundred angry draftsmen, a meeting that under normal circumstances would have drawn only ten to twelve diehards. A follow-up meeting on August 23 brought out more than five hundred technical workers, resulting in the birth of FAECT, which not only challenged the low standards set by the professional organizations but also their abject failure to involve the members in the decisions. A delegation was hastily assembled to go to Washington, D.C., to testify at the Construction Industry Code Hearings and was instrumental in having the codes withdrawn for revision. Within six months, FAECT locals were formed in Philadelphia and Chicago. By the time of its First National Convention in Chicago in December 1934, more than fifteen locals with over 6,500 members had been organized from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco; from Detroit to Florida.[4]

FAECT's radical leaders were well aware of the difficulty in representing professionals who did not necessarily accept their ideological commitments to socialism and the labor movement. At the 1934 convention, prior to affiliation with the CIO, they recognized the need to "Take into consideration the nature of our organization and our objectives, the background of our members with respect to their relation to the social and economic structure as a group . . ." To this end, FAECT did not at first define itself as a trade union, but rather as "an economic organization, functioning in much the same manner as a labor union." Given the dire circumstances of the time, it was natural that the union focus immediately on day-to-day economic issues. It was this commitment that won the support of the more conservative members, whose disagreements with the left leadership extended even to such issues as the need for public housing.[5]

The Federation's leaders also realized that its members had professional goals. Architect Morris Zeitlin, one of the union's New York City leaders, noted in a recent letter to me, "Such a labor union, it recognized, had to address both the issue of jobs, wages and working conditions and the aspirations of its membership to exercise their professional skills." To promote professional status and advancement, FAECT founded its Federation Technical School in 1936. This school responded to the needs of the union's unemployed members, to those preparing for licensing and civil service exams, and to workers who wanted to keep abreast of technological developments.

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As might be expected, conflicts developed within the union around the issue of trade unionism versus professionalism. Among the professional skills of engineers were those associated with increasing productive efficiency, something not necessarily beneficial to workers. Some FAECT members did not really recognize the conflict here. Harry Steingardt, one of the original FAECT organizers, represents the ambivalent and sometimes contradictory thinking of professional and technical workers. In a recent interview, done shortly after his ninety-fifth birthday, Mr. Steingardt described his role in the union:

> My own role in FAECT was as an educator. I taught speedup. My job was a production engineer. I believed in helping make the worker more efficient, in reducing the amount of time necessary for work and in increasing profits, that this improved society. I believed this as well as being a socially minded person and a socialist.[6]

Some FAECT members chose to maintain membership in both the union and the professional organizations, a few of which occasionally collaborated with the union on specific issues though they were opposed to joining the trade-union movement. The Architects Guild of America, for example, joined FAECT members in picketing the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to protest the low wages paid to architects and draftsmen working on public housing. However, when FAECT proposed a merger, the Guild declined, preferring to maintain itself as a separate, craft-based organization.[7]

FAECT's members were predominantly technicians in industrial, medical, and dental laboratories, construction draftsmen, and chemists. Most of its leaders were graduates of professional schools of architecture, engineering, and chemistry. Some were well-known progressive professionals, including Frederick L. Ackerman, the first technical director of NYCHA; architects Percival Goodman, Simon Breines, Henry Churchill, and James Marston Fitch; and *Progressive Architecture* editor Tom Creighton. The union organized locals in a wide variety of shops, museums, dental labs, architectural firms, housing authorities, Works Progress Administration projects, shipyards, civil service, and corporations in the automobile, electrical, and chemical industries.

The union proclaimed itself the "progressive vanguard of the technical professions," vowing to cooperate with "fellow workers" in the factories. It actively opposed efforts by the Department of

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Labor to separate professional workers from nonprofessionals on the basis that the former's special skills placed them in an "executive capacity" along with other professionals in private practice, who worked as consultants. FAECT pointed out that this group represented a mere 5 percent of all engineers; the other 95 percent worked for salaries and were therefore indistinguishable from production workers.

In January 1937, FAECT joined the CIO. In response to its leaders' understanding of the special needs and traditions of its professional and technical membership, as well as the CIO's interest in having the union within its fold, the CIO granted FAECT a special status. Its members were not distributed among the industrial unions in the firms where they worked, nor were they amalgamated into the CIO's general white-collar union, the United Office and Professional Workers of America (UOPWA). Instead, they worked closely with the CIO in a special campaign to organize the technical workers independently but in close collaboration with unions in all fields in which the CIO was active, such as auto, steel, radio, oil, machinery, public utilities, and construction.

The Federation behaved like a typical CIO union. It raised the usual bread-and-butter demands without pressing for any special privilege over blue-collar workers. It regarded collective bargaining and strikes as normal trade-union tactics. FAECT joined the CIO in supporting the New Deal, demanding more social and public-works programs such as publicly subsidized housing, situating itself in opposition to big business, and passing resolutions favoring the safeguarding of civil rights and civil liberties and opposing the rising tide of fascism. At the chapter level, FAECT architects went beyond trade-union concerns and used their professional skills to aid tenant organizations in their legal battles against slumlords. They inspected slum buildings, identified housing-law violations, wrote briefs presented in courts, and appeared as expert witnesses. According to Morris Zeitlin, it was this volunteer activism that strengthened the loyalty of its members.[8]

The union took a principled position on the divisive issue of racism. At the First National Convention in Chicago, the hotel management refused to allow an invited black guest to use the passenger elevator. A special session of the convention was then held to address this matter. Some delegates insisted that support

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for the black guest would cost the union support in the South. The delegate from Buffalo cautioned that a stand on racial discrimination would be equated with left-wing politics. FAECT stood firm, threatening to move the convention from the hotel if the black guest, an electrical engineer, was not treated with respect. The progressives prevailed, on both the convention and the hotel.[9]

The Second World War, Labor-Management Committees, and the Atom Bomb

Between 1940 and early 1941, the Second World War began to take center stage. While it opposed the threat of growing fascism abroad, FAECT showed equal concern with the war's negative impact on social spending at home. It also noted the shift in investment from consumer goods to defense; shortages in the former were generating higher prices, while profits in the latter were rapidly rising. At the same time, there was increasing discussion by industry and government of the need to implement a freeze on both wages and movement between jobs and to impose higher taxes on middle-income groups. Labor unions, especially those in the CIO, were systematically attacked for making "unpatriotic" demands for a fair share of rapidly rising defense profits as a partial offset to heavier tax burdens and inflation. Their response was, "Charges of lack of patriotism ill become the spokesmen of the defense industries which are making millions in profits."[10]

In October 1941, FAECT declared its aim "to organize the quarter million technical men in the US" to protect and advance their technical and professional standards. At its Sixth National Convention in Detroit, FAECT-SDE (the Society of Design Engineers, now affiliated with FAECT) announced that its membership included 50 percent of all Detroit technical personnel, with active locals in every Detroit auto plant. FAECT's leadership proclaimed its readiness to "give its all" in the fight against fascism, while pressuring industry to bear its fair share of taxes and share the excessive profits it had made from lucrative defense contracts. FAECT-SDE linked the war against enemies abroad to those at home: ". . . only the voluntary efforts of a free people resolved to defend this country with its democratic institutions and rights can insure us of victory over Fascism abroad and over the anti-labor and anti-democratic forces at home . . ."[11]

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The Second World War, like the First, provoked discussion by business, government, and labor about the possibility and necessity of greater labor-management collaboration. In 1942, FAECT released an important publication, "Producing for Victory—A Labor Manual for Increasing War Production." Published by the CIO, it called upon President Roosevelt and the War Production Board to direct the mandatory creation of Labor-Management Committees in all defense plants. Through such committees, "FAECT must take its place . . . with the rest of organized labor in ending the dominance of monopoly in the defense program."[12] The *New Republic* considered this document "one of the best pieces of propaganda for democratic ideals that has appeared in this country since the war began. . . ."[13] By December 1942, over sixteen hundred plants large and small, throughout the nation had adopted the plan.

The FAECT booklet focused on ways to increase productivity to strengthen the war effort: ". . . to increase war production labor takes on obligations not ordinarily called for during normal labor-management relations. Labor itself takes a big part in increasing efficiency." The booklet then went on to note postwar implications of these temporary conditions:

> [t]he results of improved efficiency will naturally carry over to postwar conditions. The massing of facts and programs throughout industry should enable labor and management to work together later on so that labor may justly share in both the direction and rewards of industrial enterprise.

It ended with these optimistic projections: "When we convert back to the production of goods for peace we shall once again have a common problem. Then, too, as now, we shall always be available for the common effort in our common solution of the problems facing us as victorious and free Americans."[14]

The kind of cooperation envisioned by FAECT made employers very nervous, as did the unusual appointment of W. L. Fowlks, Secretary Treasurer of FAECT Chapter 25 in California, to convert El Dorado Oil Company's plants in Oakland and Berkeley to war production. Fowlks had been selected for the job at a joint meeting of management and the three unions representing the workers at El Dorado: FAECT, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, and the Machinists' Union. The plant had been making oil from South Sea copra but this was halted by the war, so the company and the workers were highly motivated to

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accept war-related production alternatives. But even the liberal representatives of management at *Fortune* magazine could not conceive of such labor roles within labor-management committees. As a *Fortune* writer put it, "I believe in Labor and Management Committees to discuss both conditions of employment and production. There is a difference of function, of course, between management and labor; management must have the final say about production questions."[15]

From the more conservative corporate world, the reaction was far more critical. Charles E. Wilson of General Motors said right after the war that labor's "attempt to press the boundary farther and farther into the area of managerial functions" threatened the "American system" with a social revolution "imported from east of the Rhine."[16] An even more strident attack came from *Nation's Business* as early as 1942: "We stand under an attack and a challenge. This attack impugns our integrity, our ability, and our loyalty to our country." This comment by the Automobile Manufacturers Association was in response to the United Auto Workers' (UAW) promotion of labor-management committees in defense plants: "To many people, this plan . . . is nothing more than a patriotic effort to speed production. But it can only be understood as part of a much bigger idea . . . That idea is union control of industry."[17]

In raising the issue of labor-management committees, the CIO unions, including FAECT, were asking essential questions. Expertise and professional and technical skills are needed to run industry. But to whom, to what social class or constituencies, are they to be responsible? To the private sector or to society as a whole? FAECT, by joining the labor movement, was saying that workers, including the technical and professional workers, could run industry independently of corporate control. No wonder the corporations responded with such hysteria.

The same kinds of questions and the same business responses were broached concerning fundamental scientific research, a particularly explosive issue in this era of the development of nuclear weapons. In the late 1930s, FAECT member and respected industrial economist Dr. Walter Polokov addressed labor's role in technological innovation in a series of articles in FAECT's edition of the *CIO News*. He noted how labor had always fought against engineering dedicated to designing, improving, and managing production to maximize corporate profit rather than to

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serve society. It was labor's duty to study the social and economic impact of mechanization and other cost-saving practices. ". . . [L]abor costs thus saved must be equitably divided between the consumer, employer, and the employees."[18] Just prior to the war, FAECT's Washington, D.C., chapter editorialized that ". . . necessary research must soon assume a public character, so that the fruits of scientific work will be devoted to the whole nation, in distinction to the secretive character of research work of the industrial laboratory."[19]

A number of scientists had joined FAECT for economic, political, and ideological reasons. Some were involved with very sensitive wartime research, including development of the atomic bomb. Robert Oppenheimer and his brother, Frank, were both members, as were numerous other progressive scientists and technicians, including mechanical engineer Julius Rosenberg. The War Department was so concerned that it requested that the FAECT local at the Berkeley Radiation Laboratory be disbanded. General Leslie Groves, head of the Manhattan Project, stated in a memorandum to the Secretary of War on August 17, 1943, that "[t]he activities of the FAECT Local No. 25 have already seriously compromised the security of the Berkeley work . . . It is essential that action be taken to remove the influence of the FAECT from the [Berkeley] Radiation Laboratory. . . ." On November 2, 1943, President Roosevelt was notified that CIO president Philip Murray had been contacted and would immediately instruct the union concerned to stop efforts to organize. Murray complied. Organizing stopped.[20]

This event highlighted the strategically important social role scientists could play when linked to an independent labor movement, as opposed to being at the beck and call of corporate America. It also substantiated the threat that such realignment might create for a corporate America committed to maintaining its hegemony over research, hence capital's strong and persistent efforts to prevent it.

The End of FAECT

By 1946, many of the left-led unions in the CIO were experiencing growing Cold-War repression, both from the developing anticommunist witch hunts and from corporate efforts to roll back the advances made by workers during the New Deal and the Second World War. FAECT itself was accused of abetting nuclear espionage. So it was no surprise that FAECT, in order to maintain

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what strength remained within its thinning ranks, decided in March 1946 to amalgamate with the closely associated, and considerably larger, left-led UOPWA, which had thirty-four thousand members. This union, in turn, was expelled from the CIO in the spring of 1950, as the CIO turned decisively right. The remnants of UOPWA then affiliated with District 65 of the Distributive, Processing, and Office Workers of America, which served as a repository for members of various radical unions banished from the CIO. Finally, District 65 affiliated with the UAW in 1980.

Lessons for the Future

How do technical and professional workers fit into the new circumstances? How significant are these workers today and how important will they be in the future? They still comprise a small share of the labor force—16 percent in 1982 and 17 percent in 1995—though they are growing rapidly.[21] Strategically, they are of increasing importance: in analysis, research and development, decision-making, communication, planning of production, distribution, and governance. This sector is also a part of the new white-collar majority of the working class, a constituency with whom they share a closer cultural affinity than with the former blue-collar majority and with whom they constitute a potential electoral majority.[22]

Is the same process of rationalization analyzed by Harry Braverman in *Labor and Monopoly Capital* also occurring here and, if so, to what degree and with what results? Is the trend toward increasing firm size affecting white-collar operations? Will such firms limit the autonomy, the intimacy, and the discretionary powers and control often held by professionals? Will an increased division of labor and specialization also take place within such firms, creating a greater hierarchy of responsibilities, tasks, and associated benefit packages? Will such changes challenge the social and economic status and relative autonomy achieved through the attainment of professional degrees and licensing, shattering expectations of upward class mobility?

There are indications that the answer to all of these questions is "yes." Increasing numbers of professionals have embraced unionization as not only desirable but essential to their well-being. Recent examples of a new attitude among technical and professional workers include: the strike of seventeen thousand technical workers and engineers at Boeing in February 2000,

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the largest white-collar strike in US history; the June 1999 vote to form a union for doctors by the 290,000 members of the American Medical Association, who were worried about losing autonomy and providing inferior service to patient by health maintenance organizations; the drive by some Microsoft contractors (typically long-term temporary workers) to negotiate job classifications, pay rates, and benefits and their affiliation with the Communications Workers of America (CWA); and the 1999 formation by IBM employees of a national organization affiliated with the CWA, after IBM imposed drastic pension changes that threatened the retirement security of thousands of its workers.

The development of a transformative strategy, committed to bringing compatible pieces together around a common vision where the quality of life, not money, is the bottom line, is crucial in the coming period. As in the 1930s, labor will be critical in this process. Both inside and outside its ranks, there will be a strategic role for technical and professional workers.

But today's conditions differ radically from those that gave rise to the formation of FAECT: economic depression, a major political shift to the left, an active and competent radical presence within that shift, a growing international alternative to capitalism, and a broad-based antifascist movement. Despite these major differences, many creative components of a challenge to the status quo are present. The "Battle of Seattle" in November and December 1999 brought many of these elements together. What is needed now is to build on that intiative, linking the local to the global on a sustainable basis.

The political forces of the center and left currently have neither the political strength nor the programmatic clarity to build a national political movement. However, sufficient forces with significant track records do exist in certain metropolitan regions. One such possibility is to move toward building regional progressive coalitions that link the current initiatives of regionally based central labor councils to their regional allies, concerned with issues such as living-wage campaigns, programs for expanding public transportation, affordable housing, accessible healthcare, equal educational opportunities, tax reform, the environment, cultural enrichment, and regional planning: in short, a *new* New Deal.

Such regional alliances would have within their ranks major political constituencies and all the skills necessary for engaging in

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and developing an alternative vision for progressive regional development. Tapping university resources; the moral authority of the progressive religious community; the social and environmental consciousness of the peace, justice, antiracist, and ecology movements; and the muscle and leadership of a revived labor movement, this coalition could help lay the foundation from which a political alternative (already in motion around the Green Party's Nader and LaDuke campaign) could take off, once the already-maturing crisis of an overextended global economy spreads more broadly and deeply.

A modest but useful first step toward rebuilding necessary alliances among movements is the formation of safe and lively metropolitan regional centers for progressive activist communities and representatives of central labor councils to address these issues, exchange ideas, and mobilize support for shared concerns and actions. It is here also that technical and professional workers can offer their skilled services to promote a common agenda, both as members of the labor movement and as allies within a broad-based community coalition dedicated to social transformation. And it is here that we might once again witness the end of corporate America's control over the hearts and minds of technical and professional workers.

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9. Schuman, 22.
10. *CIO News*, May 5, 1941, 8.
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"Some years ago it dawned on me that what's called class warfare in this country goes in only one direction—up. You are engaging in class warfare if you point out what sort of people would benefit from a repeal of the estate tax... If you criticize welfare mothers for irresponsibility and laziness and immorality, on the other hand, you are simply trying to uphold the American virtues of thrift and ambition."
—Calvin Trillin, *Time*, October 16, 2000

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Freedom Schooling

by Grace Lee Boggs

At the June meeting of the Black Radical Congress in Detroit, conference delegates decided to launch a campaign for "Education, not Incarceration."

That means we have to redefine what we mean by education.

Today's schools create addicts and prepare our children for prison because they teach passivity. What our children need most is a sense of themselves as agents of change and decision-makers. They don't only need academics. They need to become resourceful, independent and critical thinkers, to see themselves in the context of community and practice what enhances community life, to recognize their worth because their input makes a difference.

In the 1960s, activists had to create Freedom Schools in the South because the existing school system had been organized to produce subjects, not citizens. People in the community, both children and adults, needed to be empowered to exercise their civil and voting rights. A mental revolution was needed. To bring it about, reading, writing, and speaking skills were taught through discussions of black history, the power structure, and building a movement to struggle against it. Everyone took this revolutionary civics course, then chose from more academic subjects like algebra and chemistry.

All over Mississippi, in church basements and parish halls, on shady lawns and in abandoned buildings, volunteer teachers empowered thousands of children and adults through this community curriculum.

One of the best current models of this kind of radical education is Detroit Summer. Calling itself a multicultural youth program and

Grace Lee Boggs writes a column called "Living for Change" for the Fresh Ideas page of the weekly *Michigan Citizen*. This is an edited version of two recent pieces from that column. For more information on Detroit Summer, call (313) 832-2904 or email <detroitsummer@hotmail.com>.

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movement, Detroit Summer combines intergenerational dialogues and skills workshops with concrete, visible neighborhood projects. Youth volunteers organize themselves to turn vacant lots into playgrounds and gardens, to work with community people (including gang members) to paint murals, and to explore new ideas about economics, transportation, education, and social change. Detroit Summer recently completed its ninth session and added fall, winter, and spring sessions to its curriculum.

Much of its success comes from combining the experience of making a visible difference in the community with discussions of ideas and issues. As young people develop confidence in their capacity to make decisions about how to design a mural or create a garden or a playscape, they also develop confidence in their ability to make decisions about their own development and the development of their city.

The beauty of Detroit Summer as a model of Freedom Schooling is that it can be organized by all kinds of grassroots community groups in their neighborhoods. Wherever they are—in churches, community centers, or lodges—people can begin working with young people on community-building activities while also engaging them in the discussions and dialogues that give them a sense of the vision and commitment that go into building a movement to create a new society. As they work to transform their physical environment, young people are also transforming themselves into leaders in the struggle. And as young people transform themselves, the adults working with them are also transformed.

In the last two years of his life, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was anticipating this kind of Freedom Schooling when he deplored the way educators were trying to instill white, middle-class values in black youth. King called for programs to involve young people in direct actions "in our dying cities" that would be self-transforming and structure-transforming.

This is the kind of Freedom Schooling we need today.

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BOOKS

"Saving" Social Security: A Neoliberal Recapitulation of Primitive Accumulation

by Alan G. Nasser

Dean Baker and Mark Weisbrot, *Social Security: The Phony Crisis* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 175 pp., $22.

The pronounced insecurity that inevitably attends capitalism's historic tendency to commodify, and hence privatize, everything that can be commodified and privatized has been met with two major forms of resistance. The first is revolutionary communism, which emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the second is social democracy, which developed in its strongest form in Europe after the Second World War. A defining feature of our present situation is that neither of these forms of resistance to capitalist hegemony is currently a major historical force.

The absence of major challenges to capitalism has led to an attack on the social and economic policies that lessen the dependence of the working population on the vagaries of the market and the demands of capital. Neoliberalism is now mainstream orthodoxy: regulation of business activity is to be eased,

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publicly owned enterprises are to be privatized, and the services and income supplements that have constituted the social wage are to be notably reduced or outright eliminated. This massive assault on the security of working people has met with no small measure of success: the real income of the typical US worker has been in decline for at least two decades, the number of medically uninsured individuals has risen, and both intra- and international inequalities have reached levels unmatched since the Great Depression. In the United States, the decline of workers' real income has been accompanied by an overall shift of national income from labor to capital.[1]

The 1990s have seen two tremendous attacks by the rulers on the welfare and security of working people. The first, in 1996, resulted in a ruling-class victory: the sixty-year-old federal income guarantee for poor families was abolished. The second onslaught is still underway. It aims to cut benefits and at least partially privatize the Social Security system, which would no longer function as a system of social *insurance*, protecting all workers in the face of any misfortune that might befall them. Groups such as the Urban Institute, the Concord Coalition, the Cato Institute, and the National Center for Policy Analysis have produced a barrage of studies and statistics designed to undermine the most successful US program explicitly intended to reduce poverty. Jeanette Nordstrom of the National Center for Policy Analysis makes the aim of her organization clear: "to break the strong tie between the taxes employees pay during their working years and their right to a pension later on."[2] The media have on the whole communicated this agenda to the American people under the rhetoric of the "crisis" that Social Security faces and the corresponding need to "save the system"—presumably by excising its guts.

Social Security is often characterized as a pay-as-you-go arrangement under which current benefit payments are financed out of current payroll taxes. Yet, rather than conforming strictly to a pay-as-you-go principle, whereby current proceeds are immediately spent to meet current obligations, Social Security has been structured along actuarial lines (used by insurance companies) almost

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from the beginning. This has required the amassing of trust funds to meet future exigencies. Since 1984, the system has been building up a surplus of tax revenues over benefit payments, which the Social Security Administration (SSA) is required by law to use to buy US Treasury obligations. It has accumulated almost one trillion dollars in these government bonds and continues to add to this amount to the tune of more than one hundred billion dollars a year. (The current surplus stands at about 150 billion dollars.) According to figures accepted by all sides of the debate, the program will take in enough revenue to pay all promised benefits for almost forty years, without any change at all in the tax or benefit payout structure. (Baker and Weisbrot's analysis is based largely on the then-latest figures released by the SSA in April 1999, which projected a revenue shortfall in 2034. SSA's 2000 report, released last March, revises this projection to 2037. It's worth noting that for years, SSA set the dreaded date at 2029. Their 1998 report jumped the date to 2032, and the 1999 report to 2034. With the current wisdom projecting to 2037, we can probably expect further postponements of Judgment Day. This is remarkable in itself. What other project of this size, private or public, is able to guarantee its benefits for almost four decades?)

So what is all the fuss about? Most Americans seem to believe the scenario, put forward by pro-privatization think-tanks, politicians, and the media that (in the words of a 1998 report by the Heritage Foundation) "the Social Security system is bankrupt." It is this belief that leads many Americans to support neoliberal demands for privatization. The stock market is touted as a more secure investment outlet for workers than an allegedly insolvent fund managed by "big government." After all, haven't stocks been making money for "us" hand over fist for years?

Baker and Weisbrot show in great detail that both the diagnosis of bankruptcy and the prescription of privatization are nonsense. Unlike most economists, the authors' historical literacy is formidable and their quantitative and theoretical sophistication dwarfs the kind of confused and disingenuous sophistry coming out of the right wing think-tanks. They argue rigorously from the same set of economic and demographic assumptions and the

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same numbers that the privatizers play fast and loose with and demonstrate conclusively that the recommendations of the "reformers" are entirely inconsistent with undisputed facts. The pessimism of the general public regarding Social Security's future, created with the assistance of an uncritical media establishment, is testimony to perhaps the greatest public-relations scam in contemporary America. (And the hoax extends to another major form of social security; Baker and Weisbrot also include a detailed analysis of the phony Medicare "crisis.")

What are the relevant facts? In 2014 (now 2015 according to Baker and Weisbrot), the benefits paid out by Social Security are projected to slightly exceed taxes received. But does it follow from this that Social Security is "going broke?" Of course not. The privatizers know full well that the funds borrowed from Social Security by the US Treasury are to be *paid back*, as they have been since the system's inception, *with interest*. Accordingly, the system's total income consists of payroll taxes *plus* interest income. At the end of 2014, the system is projected to take in 585 billion dollars (in 1999 dollars) in taxes and 137.9 billion dollars in interest payments for a total income of 722.9 billion. And it will have nearly 2.3 trillion dollars in assets. With benefit payments projected at 592.7 billion dollars, the total income of the system is thus expected to exceed benefit payments by 130 billion dollars. The figures show that Social Security's total income will be able to cover all benefits until 2022. From that point until 2034, Social Security will be able to pay all benefits by drawing on the principal of its accumulated assets. (These figures were reported by Baker and Weisbrot in 1999. Recall that this year's projections have extended the year of reckoning to 2037.)

Note how mainstream economic reporting misrepresents these figures. Katharine Q. Seelye recently reported for the *New York Times* (May 14, 2000, section 1, 22) that Social Security "will begin paying out more than it takes in by 2015." (The 2015 date extends the 2014 projection available to Baker and Weisbrot.) Does Seelye think that what Social Security "takes in," i.e., its income, is exhausted by payroll taxes? As we have seen, an additional component of Social Security's annual income is the interest on

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the Treasury bonds it holds, which accounts for the 270-billion-dollar *surplus* the system is officially projected to have in 2015. In fact, this surplus was *planned* precisely in order to cover the anticipated shortfall. Seelye adds insult to injury when she further claims that "without a major fix, the system could go broke by 2037." But Baker and Weisbrot show that the contribution from interest payments makes it possible for the system to pay all benefits out of its income until 2022. From then until 2037, it will draw on the principal in the trust fund to maintain full benefit payments. These payments can be further extended through 2074 with a mere 2.07 percent payroll tax increase, about 1 percent each for employer and employee. If the economy were to limp along at a growth rate somewhat lower than its present relatively low rate, indeed, if the economy simply manages to avoid a major depression, the "crisis" of Social Security, as defined by the privatizers, simply vanishes. This point requires further elaboration, as it touches on one of the principal contradictions in the case for privatization.

The SSA trustees are required by law to produce annual projections of the system's future financial status. The assumptions of the generally accepted projection are astonishing. The economy is projected to grow at an average annual rate of just under 1.5 percent over the next seventy-five years. (This year's report revises that figure to just under 1.7 percent.) This means that the economy is expected to perform worse than in almost any previous period in US history. Now if this scenario were taken seriously, one would expect the alarm to be sounded not over the "crisis" of Social Security, but over the forecast that we may well be heading for an extended period of severe economic stagnation. Neoliberals have seized upon this slow-growth assumption to argue that the economy will generate insufficient income to cover Social Security benefits. Their case is conspicuously incoherent: the privatizers' central recommendation is that a portion of workers' income be transferred to private accounts invested in the stock market. But how can the stock market be expected to provide robust returns in an economy that is projected to be in virtual long term depression? The privatizers' assumption that

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future stock market returns will reflect past returns stands in stark contradiction to their reliance on SSA's ultra-pessimistic growth forecast.

We have recently experienced the fastest increase in stock prices in US history. *MR* readers are familiar with the underlying source of this phenomenon: the pronounced evaporation of profitable investment opportunities in industrial production since the mid-1970s has drawn what would otherwise be idle wealth into the gambling casino of the financial superstructure. The dramatic increase in stock *prices* is therefore unrelated to the behavior of corporate *earnings*. This is to say that the stock market is now massively overvalued. Historically, a share of stock has been valued at fifteen dollars per dollar of earnings. After the recent market takeoff, stock shares were selling for more than thirty dollars for each dollar of earnings. It is sheer folly to imagine that the stock market will continue to soar at a rate that bears no relation to the condition of the underlying economy. And it is not only the SSA trustees who foresee a grim picture for profits. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) provides economic projections to Washington legislators debating tax and spending plans for the future. CBO anticipates after-tax corporate profits to decline by 4 percent over the next decade. The combination of current stock (over)valuations and official projections of low profit growth, both well known to Washington politicians, make it fanciful in the extreme to count on the stock market to sustain its historic rates of return. This has been demonstrated in painstaking detail by MIT professor Peter Diamond, a leading expert in public finance, and Dean Baker, who both show that the stock-return projections used by the privatizers in their calculations of the benefits of a privatized system are historically and mathematically preposterous.[3] Assume that stock prices continue to outpace profits. The current price to earnings ratio of thirty-to-one would, on the privatizers' prediction that stock returns of 7 percent can be sustained as the economy grows at half its past rate, rise to 230-to-one by 2055. Who can imagine that investors would continue to hold stocks, as opposed to government bonds, in these circumstances? When stock prices have risen this far

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from the earnings potential of the stock's underlying assets, we have the ingredients of a major stock-market crash. This kind of catastrophe appears to be implicit in the argument of the privatizers.

Keep in mind that the accuracy of SSA's and CBO's dire growth projections is not what is at issue here. The point is that the privatizers' case is conspicuously unsupported by their own data and self-contradictory to boot. To adhere simultaneously to optimistic stock-market projections and pessimistic growth projections is to try to have one's cake and eat it too. Adherence to either of the projections entails the rejection of the other. George W. Bush has recently been impaled on the horns of this dilemma. The *Washington Post* reported that Bush's aides defended their optimism regarding future stock returns by claiming that SSA's economic projections are too pessimistic (Glenn Kessler, "Bush Proposal Ventures Into Financial Unknown," May 16, 2000, A6). But if *that's* true, then Social Security is in good shape and Bush's case for privatization collapses. We have not seen slapstick logic on this order since Abbott and Costello.

The complicity of the mainstream media in the perpetuation of this entire hoax is all too familiar and hard to underestimate. It is not as if there are absolutely no references to the facts on the glaring inconsistencies of the case for privatization. It's just that the relatively very few citations of serious scholarship have no net effect on the overall impression communicated by the media. In early 1996, Robert Pear of the *New York Times* wrote a major story discussing Dean Baker's position on Social Security, which was run as written by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.* But when it appeared in the *Times*, Baker's criticism of the case for privatization had been cut. The *Times* did publish an article by one of its own editors, Fred Brock, titled "Save Social Security? From What?" in its Business section (November 1, 1998, 12), which favorably quoted Weisbrot and Baker. Brock went on to attribute the hysteria of the privatizers to "hidden agendas." And it continued, "Wall Street would love to get its hands on at least some of the billions of dollars in the Social Security trust fund . . . But knowing that the idea [of full privatization] won't fly politically, [politicians] are push-

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ing for partial privatization, in which individuals would invest a portion of their contribution in the stock market, all in the name of rescuing the system." Still, in the very same issue, the lead editorial claimed that "The next Congress will have to deal with nothing less than . . . devising a plan to save Social Security in the next generation" (14). Last May, the *Times* ran a piece ("Money For Nothing," May 28, 2000, 11) by its Op-Ed economics columnist Paul Krugman that criticized Bush's stock-price projections. Yet none of this has made any difference to the neoliberal propaganda that pervades the newspaper's front-page reporting on this issue.

Fact checking also seems to be nonexistent when it comes to Social Security. The myth of the "baby boomers," whose retirement will allegedly bust Social Security, is repeated as factual. But as Baker and Weisbrot show, the accommodation of the flood of boomer retirements from 2010-2030 has already been taken into account in the financing of Social Security. In 2037, the earliest year in which Social Security is currently projected to face financial difficulties, the biggest effect of the baby boom generation on retirement will be nearly over—the oldest baby boomers will be ninety-one and the youngest seventy-three, eleven years older than the minimum Social Security retirement age. The baby-boomer scare is factually off the wall, but you'd never know it reading the papers.

As noted at the beginning of this essay, the campaign to privatize Social Security is now the front line in the global war of neoliberalism against working people. In this onslaught, we find echoes of what Marx called "primitive accumulation." The world into which capitalism was born was not pervaded by market institutions, which is to say that human needs and desires were satisfied by means that did not on the whole render people dependent on markets for their livelihood. The historic mission of capitalism is to transform this situation by making people's ability to get what they need and want contingent upon their ability to strike a deal on a market, i.e., a deal that contributes directly or indirectly to the making of profit and the accumulation of capital. From the capitalist point of view, the ideal situation is one

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in which *everyone* is dependent upon the market for *everything* they desire. Every human activity should contribute to the accumulation of capital. Precapitalist social and economic space was not hospitable to this imperative. Most importantly, there were customary and traditional entitlements and rights of access to productive resources, e.g., land and the instruments of labor, to which one was guaranteed access simply by virtue of one's membership in one's clan, family, village, or kingdom. *It was capitalism's original business to abolish these traditional use rights on which most working people depended for their livelihood.* These *common* customary entitlements were correctly seen by capitalist landlords as interfering with their ability to accumulate *private*, self-expanding wealth, i.e., capital.

The forced enclosures of common land first begun on a large scale in sixteenth-century England were succeeded by "Parliamentary enclosure," when acts of Parliament formally reconstituted common resources as private property. Indeed, the history of enclosure in England from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth century might be termed the "primitive privatization," the historical progenitor of the contemporary neoliberal project to privatize and deregulate everything. The Parliamentary enclosures transformed what had originated as a wave of coerced expulsions into a *political* process, the legally sanctioned removal of any obstacles to the ongoing and limitless accumulation of capitalist wealth.

This secular tendency of capital to universally privatize was temporarily offset in the middle of the twentieth century by the emergence of the New Deal in the United States and social democracy in Europe. But even these meager provisions of nonmarket benefits proved to be too radical for capital. Born-again capitalism is now the order of the day, and social security is once again, as it was way back then, a principal obstacle to profitability. The struggle of large English landowners to privatize historically common land finds its contemporary counterpart in the campaign of big banks and Wall Street brokerage houses to put to private, profitable use resources currently earmarked for workers in need. Just as the social costs of the transition to capitalism were

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borne by the working population, so too the attempted transition *back* to pre-Keynesian capitalism will be borne by the same class. The administrative costs of privately managing a huge number of individual accounts in Chile and Britain amount to over 16 percent of the systems' annual revenue. If the US system was run in a comparable way, about seventy billion dollars would be transferred every year from workers' retirement accounts to brokerage houses and banks. Administrative costs under the present system, on the other hand, amount to less than 1 percent of total benefits paid each year. It would be about forty years before the first generation of private Social Security investors could retire on the returns from their individual accounts. Since current benefits will continue to be paid out of the system's current income, how will four decades of beneficiaries be able to receive their payments if a substantial portion of Social Security tax revenue continues to be diverted to individual private accounts? Surely not by tapping the resources of others' private accounts. Barring sharp cuts in benefits, tax increases will become a virtual necessity and these will be enough, as Baker and Weisbrot point out, to ensure a negative return overall for the first generations of privatized savers.

If working people knew all this, they would not support this venal agenda. One of the principal tasks of the socialist left is to fill the factual and analytical vacuum created by the corporate media. As immediate educational tasks go, none is more urgent than this one.

NOTES

1. L. Mishel, J. Bernstein, and J. Schmitt, *The State of Working America, 1998-1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).
2. Quoted in Trudy Lieberman, "Social Security: The Campaign to Take the System Private," *The Nation*, January 27, 1997, 13.
3. Baker's arguments can be found in his detailed letter to the Harvard economist Martin Feldstein at *<http://www.cepr.net/Social_Security/letter_to_feldstein2.htm>*, and Diamond's "What Stock Market Returns to Expect for the Future?" at *<http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/csom/executive/crr/ib2.htm.>*
4. For a fuller discussion, see Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999.)

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Imperial Democracy: Conundrums of Japan in American Embrace

by Mark Selden

Dower, John W., *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 676 pp., $14.35, paperback, illustrated with photographs, cartoons, posters.

Embracing Defeat is John Dower's magisterial chronicle of Japan under United States occupation, the capstone of his five important studies of twentieth-century Japan and the US-Japan relationship in war and peace.[1] Central to the work, as well as to the continuing debate about the occupation, are three intertwined issues whose resolution would profoundly affect Japan's postwar course: the question of the emperor, the constitution and democratization, and the war crimes tribunals.

The early occupation emerges in these pages as the boldest, and in certain ways the most quixotic, attempt at social engineering ever attempted to refashion another society as a democratic nation. "Initially," Dower tells us with characteristic incisiveness and irony, "the Americans imposed a root-and-branch agenda of 'demilitarization and democratization' that was in every sense a remarkable display of arrogant idealism—both self-righteous and genuinely visionary." Drawing on a wealth of archival, documentary, and published Japanese- and English-language sources, he highlights MacArthur's arrogance and peccadilloes while positively assessing US and Japanese contributions to an enduring democratic transformation. "Never," he concludes with a rhetorical flourish, "had a genuinely democratic revolution been associ-

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ated with military dictatorship, to say nothing of a neocolonial military dictatorship. ..."

What is most original and important in this work, however, is not its reading of the grand narrative of the state but its ability to transcend the official record to locate the Japanese people in the flow of cataclysmic change. In this realm, the book brings to a close a previous generation of scholarship and points the way toward future research agendas.

This first attempt to explore the social and cultural history of the era reveals how the Japanese people, from the highest levels of imperial and state power to the grassroots, speaking and acting not in a single voice but in all their diversity, shaped important outcomes. Defeat and occupation, Dower tells us, "forced Japanese in every walk of life to struggle, in exceptionally naked ways, with the most fundamental of life's issues—and that they responded in recognizably human, fallible, and often contradictory ways that can tell us a great deal about ourselves and our world in general." They did so at times by reinforcing, at others by subtly subverting, the vision and plans of their US military rulers, drawing on the powers that flowed from the US decision to rule indirectly through the Japanese government and to democratize Japan.

"Much that lies at the heart of contemporary Japanese society—the nature of its democracy, the intensity of popular feelings about pacifism and remilitarization, the manner in which the war is remembered (and forgotten) derives," Dower observes, "from the complexity of the interplay between the victors and the vanquished." Half a century later, both achievements and a host of unresolved problems that are among the contradictory legacies of the occupation continue to shape Japan, the US-Japan relationship, and the political economy and strategic configurations of the Pacific.

Why did MacArthur, that democratic Caesar, personally assure not only the preservation of the monarchy, but also the continued reign of Hirohito, who bore ultimate responsibility for Japan's brutal war with Asia, and subsequently with the United States and its allies? US policymakers, above all

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MacArthur, who were convinced that Hirohito was indispensable to preserving stability and easing the task of the occupying forces, set about exonerating the emperor from the military and from an unpopular war that ended in disaster for the Japanese people. Occupation authorities thus worked hand in hand with those in government and at court who sought to protect the emperor from pressures to accept responsibility for the war and retire (imperial retirement to a monastery was common throughout Japan's imperial history), assuring that Hirohito would reign until his death in 1989. "[T]he occupation authorities" Dower observes, "chose not merely to detach the emperor from his holy war, but to restitute him as the center of their new democracy."

MacArthur emerges from these richly illustrated pages alternately bigger than life, as in the iconic photograph of the proconsul towering over an ostensibly subservient Hirohito, and ludicrously naive and out of touch with Japanese thought and society. In the end, however, it is the elusive figure of the emperor that attracts the author's interest and leads him to challenge the dominant Japanese and western historiography of a powerless figurehead. Building on Herbert Bix's innovative and important research,[2] *Embracing Defeat* brings the emperor out of the shadows and into the spotlight as a shrewd and powerful actor, indeed "the nation's most interesting and influential political actor. . . . He used people and knowingly allowed himself to be used by them." Among those Hirohito used effectively were MacArthur and the occupation leadership. They would exonerate the emperor from responsibility for everything from the savage fifteen-year colonial war fought in his name to the attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent US-Japan war, to the range of atrocities committed under his command, from the Nanjing Massacre to the enslavement of more than one hundred thousand Korean and other "comfort women."

Dower reserves his most trenchant political criticism of the emperor and the Japanese political system for an article in the Japanese journal *Sekai*.[3] There he underlines the lasting significance of the emperor's failure, whether by apology or by step-

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ping down from the throne, "to take even moral responsibility for the 'Great East Asia War' that devastated Asia and his own subjects..." The result was simultaneously to preserve the imperial mystique and to prevent apology for, never mind responsible criticism of, Japanese colonialism or the death of twenty million Asians and three million Japanese as a result of Japan's fifteen-year war. To do so would imply the unthinkable: criticism of Hirohito, who bore ultimate authority for these acts. Whereas German apologies and reparations have enabled that nation for the most part to overcome historical hostilities and to provide leadership in the European Union, Japan's inability to lay to rest wartime issues remains a source of tension in Japanese, and particularly in Asian, politics.[4]

In an interview with me, Dower expanded on the theme of an activist emperor not only in wartime but during the occupation, noting Hirohito's personal initiative in sacrificing the Okinawan people to US Cold-War designs by offering the United States virtually unrestricted military use of the island and continuing US rule long after the main islands were returned to Japan. Hirohito's shrewd ploy reduced US demands for bases in the home islands and probably expedited the end of the occupation by providing assurance of Japanese cooperation in long term US military strength in the area. It was also thoroughly consistent with the Japanese military's earlier sacrifice of the Okinawan people, one-fourth of whom perished in the final great battle of the war in a doomed effort.[5]

The Nuremburg and Tokyo trials following the Second World War were the start of the tradition of international tribunals to punish war atrocities and other human rights violations. But in buying into and perpetuating the myth of the peace emperor, and in protecting Hirohito from prosecution and even from providing testimony, the United States made a mockery of any claims to evenhandedness in the Tokyo Tribunals. It thus placed the exclusive onus for war crimes on Hirohito's subordinates while shielding the Emperor, who bore ultimate responsibility for the war, not only from prosecution but even from offering testimony.

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Breaking with the image long cultivated both by Japanese and US officials of Hirohito as a passive figure (the sole exception being self-serving claims of his dramatic initiative to end the war), Dower offers another telling example of imperial activism in the early occupation. This was Hirohito's intervention to recast the imperial rescript of New Year's Day 1946. While many have taken the document as a "sweeping 'renunciation of divinity,'" *Embracing Defeat* shows that "[T]hrough the use of esoteric language, Emperor Hirohito adroitly managed to descend only partway from heaven . . . [T]he rescript seized the initiative for the throne by identifying it with a 'democracy' rooted neither in the reformist policies of the victors nor in popular initiatives from below, but in governmental pronouncements dating back to the beginning of the reign of Hirohito's grandfather, the Meiji emperor." Again in 1951, affirming his intention to remain on the throne at the conclusion of the occupation, Hirohito scotched the language of an earlier draft, which stated "I deeply apologize to the nation for my responsibility for the defeat." "For the defeat," but not, of course, for the lives lost, whether Japanese, Asians, or others, and certainly not for the atrocities committed in the name of the emperor. But even that phrase was too much. There would be no imperial apology.

The United States, in shielding Hirohito from prosecution, absolving him of responsibility for Japan's aggression, and burnishing the image of the peacemaker who acted decisively and selflessly to end the war and save the nation, played a pivotal role in enshrining what Dower at various times labels imperial democracy or "oxymoronic democracy" in highlighting the ironies and ambiguities of the gift of democracy from on high, a gift intertwined with the preservation of the Hirohito reign. In an act of extraordinary hubris, Japan's democratic constitution was drafted secretly in a one-week "Constitutional Convention" by the occupation's Government Section with no input from, or even consultation with, Japanese authorities or the Japanese people. Its basis was three principles advanced orally by MacArthur: the Emperor is the head of the state; war as a sovereign right of the nation is abolished; and the feudal system of Japan will cease.

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Interestingly, not one of MacArthur's three principles specified either the democratic principles that, together with the no-war clause, were the finest achievements of the Constitution.

In his *Sekai* essay, Dower spells out what he calls "collusive Orientalism:" the condescending notion among British and US experts that the Japanese people were an "obedient herd," incapable of independent thought and democratic action. The United States was not, however, forced to rely on its own feverish imaginations in attributing a herdlike mentality to the Japanese people. It could easily point to official Japanese slogans such as "one hundred million acting as one" (*ichi oku isshin*) and to Hirohito's self-serving assessments of the dangerous group instincts of the Japanese people—delivered personally to MacArthur to reinforce the general's own Orientalist images and deny the Japanese people the capability of self-government. The New Deal reformers who constituted the heart of the occupation leadership nevertheless rejected this premise and pressed forward with their "revolution from above," which presumed that, given the opportunity, the Japanese people would embrace fundamental democratizing changes.

In one of the supreme ironies that are sprinkled liberally throughout *Embracing Defeat*, the United States, having created the world's only unequivocal peace constitution in 1946, reversed course within a year in an effort to secure Japanese military assistance to prevent the victory of the Chinese revolution and then to pursue war in Korea. At the heart of the reversal was the decision to rearm and reindustrialize Japan as a subordinate but critical partner in US military operations in Asia. Nevertheless, the Japanese people, primarily in response to their own suffering during the Pacific War, by and large embraced and continue to embrace the pacifist principles enshrined in the Constitution, even in the face of repeated attacks on Article Nine by the Japanese government and Japanese rightists. Dower is on familiar ground when discussing the Constitution and following the reverse course interpretation. His work on this topic reinforces and adds rich detail to that interpretation by highlighting the depths of peace sentiment among the Japanese people that continue today.

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Even in drafting the Constitution, an ostensibly American affair, Japanese input proved significant. In this instance, Japanese officials successfully undermined key democratic precepts of the English-language original. In place of a polity that derived its ultimate strength and legitimacy from the people (*jinmin*), for example, Japanese authorities substituted a term for people (*kokumin*) that strengthened the authority of the emperor and the state. Summing up the results, Dower concludes that

> No modern nation ever has rested on a more alien constitution—or a more unique wedding of monarchism, democratic idealism, and pacifism; and few, if any, alien documents have ever been as thoroughly internalized and vigorously defended as this national charter would come to be.

Well, yes and no. The "no war" provision of Article Nine was indeed internalized by many people in the wake of a disastrous war. Yet government and ruling-party actions have continued to erode the provision through steady expansion of the activities of the Self-Defense Force, while the weakening of progressive forces in Japanese politics in the 1990s opens the possibility that the constitutional foundations of the peace provisions will be scrapped.

Dower's nuanced appreciation of the achievements of the occupation in creating lasting bases for a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous capitalist Japan goes hand in hand with a withering critique of the chauvinism and misunderstandings both of Japanese and US elites. Of the secret US drafting of the Japanese Constitution, he concludes, "The line between Supreme Commander and Supreme Being was always a fine one in MacArthur's mind. In these momentous days of early February 1947 he came close to obliterating the distinction entirely." Similarly, Dower lays bare the self-serving actions of the Emperor, court officials, and much of the military and business elite: in disguising the Emperor's responsibility for the actions of empire and war committed in his name, attempting to sabotage the democratic provisions of the Constitution, and plundering the national treasury for private profit in the immediate aftermath of the surrender. The Japan that emerged politically and socially trans-

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formed from the ashes of defeat, far from being a US creation, was the product of a complex and often contradictory synergy of Americans and Japanese. Building on a US vision, both its achievements and its flaws rested on the complementary roles played by Japanese people and elites, including both prewar economic and institutional foundations and the democratic aspirations of the Japanese people.

In his earlier classic study, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, Dower provided a memorable image that anticipated the sea change that would take place in US perceptions of Japan and the US-Japan relationship in the aftermath of the battle of Okinawa, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan's surrender.

The cover of *Leatherneck*'s September 1945 issue displayed a battered and vexed but loveable monkey cradled in the arms of a large smiling GI pleased with his new pet. It was that childlike image of the Japanese people that MacArthur cherished throughout his Japan years, during which he maintained a splendid isolation from Japanese society in ways that invite comparison with the cloistered lives of Japanese emperors. The Supreme Commander's perspective drew on American clichés of the simple, even childlike character of the Japanese as incapable of independent thought, even as it reversed the wartime vision of a people capable of fiendish cruelty while eliding all notions of the complexity of Japanese society. In the coming decades, "MacArthur's children" would prove themselves to be supremely apt pupils in seizing the economic opportunities opened by the occupation to challenge American economic supremacy.

Like no earlier study of postwar Japan, *Embracing Defeat* brings to the fore the ironies and contradictions of the era and critically reassesses the great issues of Japan's postwar Constitution, US-Japan relations, democratization, and the role of Japan in the making of the US hegemonic order in Asia and globally. For example, we learn that in the brief period between Japan's surrender and the landing of US forces, the Japanese authorities created an indigenous "comfort woman" system to service (and control) the GIs. Where the Japanese military had turned to

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Koreans, Filipinas, Taiwanese, Chinese, and other colonized peoples to serve as comfort women for its troops throughout the empire, the Home Ministry, as early as August 18, 1945, began recruiting Japanese women as prostitutes to serve the Americans, praising them for "the great spirit of maintaining the national polity by protecting the pure blood of the hundred million," that is, serving the country as a "dike of chastity." Against this background, the occupation's guarantees of women's electoral, labor, and social rights, beginning with constitutional provisions that remain the envy of US women half a century later, would meet a positive reception among Japanese women.

This study's important contributions lie in engaging the politics and culture of the era but the realms of economic and institutional change are barely scratched. Land reform, for example, with its far-reaching implications for rural society, is scarcely mentioned; economics and economic policy, so critical for shaping postwar Japan, are essentially relegated to the final chapter, where Dower importantly shows the ways in which Japanese planners early on anticipated much of Japan's subsequent high-tech surge. US planners, for their part, long continued to envisage an economy that would maintain the prewar focus on textile production. Future studies of the occupation will perforce go further in exploring the foundations of Japan's subsequent economic surge or perhaps anticipating the economic and social doldrums that Japan has encountered in the 1990s. If economics has come to symbolize Japan and the "Japanese challenge" for many in the United States, Europe, and Asia, the economic and institutional history of the occupation await full-dress treatment.

With this work, Dower consolidates his position as the leading Western historian of modern Japan, a position amply recognized in the book's receipt of the National Book Award, the Bancroft Prize, and the Pulitzer Prize—rare achievements indeed for a book with a critical cutting edge. *Embracing Defeat* is one of those rare books that will be read and debated on both sides of the Pacific.

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NOTES

1. The earlier works are *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E.H. Norman* edited with an introduction by John Dower (New York: Pantheon, 1975); *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1979; *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986); *Japan in War and Peace. Selected Essays* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).
2. Herbert Bix, "Emperor Hirohito's War," *History Today* (December 1991); "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation," in Michael Hogan, ed., *Hiroshima in History and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80-115; "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *Journal of Japanese Studies,* vol. 18 (Summer 1992), 295-363. ; "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," in *Journal of Japanese Studies,* vol. 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 319-363; "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52" in *Journal of Japanese Studies,* vol. 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 319-363. Subsequent to publication of *Embracing Defeat,* Bix's *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* appeared (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).
3. "*Tennosei minshushugi no tanjo: 'Showa tenno no message' o yomitoku,*" (The birth of imperial democracy: Construing the Showa Emperor's Message), *Sekai* (September 1999), 221-232. A revised and expanded version appeared in *The Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars,* vol. 31, no. 4 (October-December 1999), 19-24.
4. See Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *History Censored: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).
5. For a recent study attentive to Okinawa's place in US-Japan and global power relations, see Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Japan: Cold War Island* (Cardiff, CA: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999).

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—The Editors, "The Elections," December 1950

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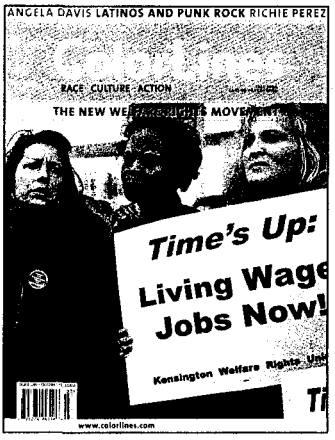

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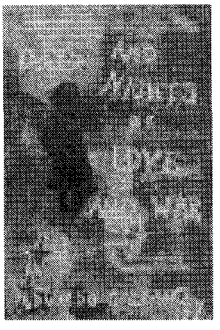

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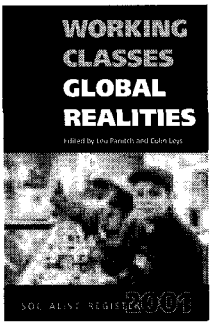

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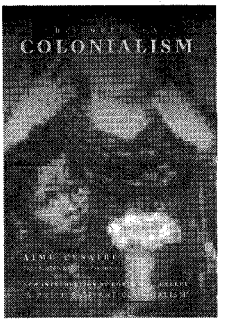

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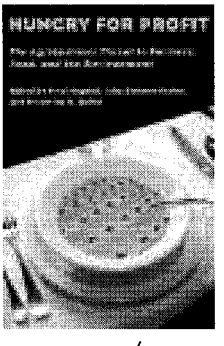

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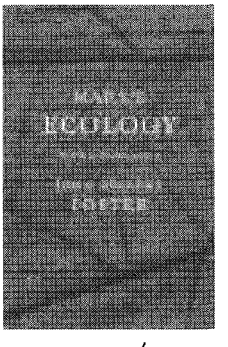

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rialists Epicurus and Lucretius, via the latter's *De rerum natura*. Moreover, his support of Epicurean atomism (considered by the medieval church to be the fountainhead of all atheism) was included in the charges of heresy leading to his condemnation. Our verdict would then be that Bruno was a martyr to science (see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution*, pp. 199, 235-237). Interestingly enough, a little more than two centuries after Bruno's execution, another heretic and defender of science, Karl Marx, was to make the same ancient materialists who had influenced Bruno (Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius) the subject of his doctoral thesis. (The story of this is told in John Foster's *Marx's Ecology*.)

~

The Russian electronic weekly newspaper, *left.ru* (located at <http://www.left.ru>) recently translated and published Michael Yates' "Workers of the World, Unite: Will this Include the US Labor Movement?" (*MR*, vol. 52, no. 3, July-August 2000). In response to an email from Michael, Svetlana Baiborodova, one of the editors of *left.ru*, said, "We are confident that it will be read and discussed with avid interest by labor activists and other leftists, that it will help Russian workers to understand better the processes going on in US labor, and to realize how crucial is the task [of building] bridges between them and their American sisters and brothers." Congratulations, Michael.

~

We record with sorrow the death on October 21 at age 106 of *MR* author Dirk J. Struik (pronounced *stroyk*). For many years a professor at MIT, he was one of the world's most influential historians of mathematics. His recent work challenged Eurocentric interpretations of the origins of mathematics (see his "Multiculturalism and the History of Mathematics," *MR*, March 1995). Dirk wrote a landmark essay on Marx's approach to calculus for the Winter 1948 issue of *Science & Society* (a journal of which he was one of the founders). He also authored the introduction to the International Press edition of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. In the McCarthy period, a grand jury accused him of advocating the overthrow of the government because of his Marxist views and MIT suspended him from teaching. The charges against him were later dropped following a Supreme Court ruling that states had no jurisdiction in such matters, and his professorship was restored. (See Struik, "The Struik Case of 1951," *MR*, January 1993.) We plan to run a more detailed assessment of Dirk's contribution to socialist thought in a future issue of *MR*.

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(continued from inside front cover)
seemed far removed from the class struggle as such. As Rosa Luxemburg once observed,

> the first volume of *Capital*...deduces the 'expropriation of the expropriators' as the inevitable and ultimate result of the production of surplus value and of the progressive concentration of capital. Therewith, as far as theory is concerned, the essential need of the labour movement is satisfied. The workers, being actively engaged in the class war, have no direct interest in the question how surplus value is distributed among the respective groups of exploiters; or in the question how, in the course of this distribution, competition brings about rearrangements of production. That is why, for socialists in general, the third volume of *Capital* remains an unread book (Luxemburg, in D. Ryazanov, *Karl Marx: Man, Thinker and Revolutionist*).

Marx's critique of capital, Luxemburg explained, was a "titanic whole" that had taken him far beyond the immediate goals of the class struggle and, hence, his work tended to transcend the most pressing interests of socialists themselves. Yet, history and the development of the movement could lead to renewed appreciation of his work: "Only in proportion as our movement progresses and demands the solution of new practical problems, do we dip once more into the treasury of Marx's thought in order to extract therefrom and to utilize new fragments of his doctrine."

Certainly, this was the experience of the small group of students who took part in the course on volumes two and three of *Capital*. In the third volume, they encountered an analysis that seemed in many ways more concrete and contemporary than what they had earlier encountered in Marx, addressing the issues that most concerned them: the relation between production and distribution, the ins and outs (and illusions) of capitalist competition, financial speculation, economic crises, capitalist agriculture and the degradation of the soil, the division between town and country on a world scale, the role of international trade, and the treatment of ideology in the famous trinity formula discussion. All of the students in the course concluded that in thinking of Marx's *Capital* in the future, their principal reference point would be volume three, since it was there that Marx's analysis of exploitation was brought home and made relevant to the driving issues of our time.

It would appear that as the globalization of capital has become a major issue, the theoretical needs of radicals, confronted with new practical problems, have widened and they are being brought back, paradoxically, to Marx—but this time with greater attention to the largely unread Marx of the second and third volumes of *Capital*. It is a testimony to the breadth of Marx's critique of capitalism that as new problems present themselves in history, his work as a whole becomes more, not less, relevant.

This year marks the four hundredth anniversary of Giordano Bruno's burning at the stake during the Roman Inquisition. Bruno was a complex figure who contributed to the development of science, materialism and the overthrow of medieval scholasticism, and who facilitated the acceptance of the Copernican interpretation of the universe, but who also advocated mystical-religious views. For four centuries, people have debated whether Bruno should be regarded as a martyr to religion or a martyr to science, with the verdict lately tending toward the former. Yet, Bruno's vision of an infinite universe, with which he complemented and helped generate acceptance for the Copernican theory, was derived largely from the ancient mate-

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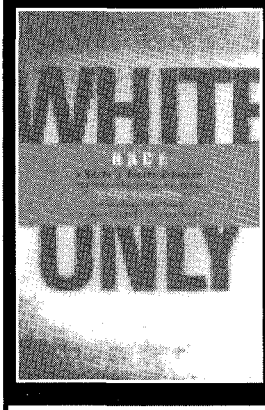

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